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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Second Order Cybernetics and the Psychotherapy Process

BY

John E. Lawrence

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF Doctor of Philosophy

IN
Counselling Psychology

DEPARTMENT OF Educational Psychology

EDMONTON ALBERTA
FALL, 1987

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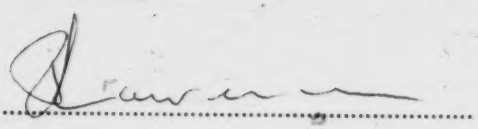

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Abstract

Five expert systemic psychotherapists each provided a four minute video-taped example of their therapy. The therapists were asked to select a segment which illustrated a change or shift on the part of the client(s) The examples were collected on one video-tape. The same therapists individually viewed the collection. They were interviewed by the author, an experienced systemic psychotherapist, and they were asked to describe in their own words, what they thought were the significant processes which occurred in each segment. They were also asked to describe relationships, and changes. Their responses were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

The investigation was designed as an exploration of systemic psychotherapists' processes of constructing psychotherapy process. The study addressed the issues of the unpredictability of client change, and divergent therapeutic styles. The approach involved an analysis of the ontogenetic linguistic construction of idiographic and consensual systemic psychotherapeutic processes. This type of study of the patterns of the organization and control of communications in observing systems has been called second order cybernetics by Heinz von Foerster. The investigation of the observers' descriptions involved lexical analysis, and analysis of observers' patterns of descriptions of behaviours, explanations and concepts. The evolution of the investigatory method was described, and the role of the investigator was emphasized.

The results include explanations using autopoietic, constructivist, and second order cybernetic theories. Comments are made regarding observers' idiographic patterns of lexical usage, and multi-levelled recursive patterns for organizing descriptions of psychotherapy process. The discussion indicates aspects of effective therapy about which there was consensus. Stylistic, choreographic, and metaphoric qualities of the observers' descriptions are discussed. The following concepts are discussed: distinctions, the politics of consensus, structure determinism, organization, eigen values, structural coupling, ontogenetic co-drift, metaphors and thresholds.

The results indicated that systemic therapists employ characteristic idiosyncratic patterns of word use, and patterns of descriptions. Effective

therapy was indicated by convergent consensual patterns of lexical and textual description The implications suggest that effective systemic psychotherapy is distinguished by therapists' and observers' more prevalent use of metaphors, unique idiosyncratic lexical items, and regular recursive use of behavioural, explanatory and conceptual descriptions. Suggestions are made for further research in psychotherapy process.

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I INTRODUCTION

A Preamble

We now have a *theory* , a 'dynamic theory' of the proposition; of language, but it does not present itself to us as a theory. For it is the characteristic thing about such a theory that it looks at a special clearly intuitive case and says: "*That* shews how things are in every case; this case is the exemplar of *all* cases." -- "Of course! It has to be like that" we say, and are satisfied. We have arrived at a form of expression that *strikes us as obvious.* But it is as if we had now seen something lying *beneath* the surface.

The tendency to generalize the case seems to have a strict justification in logic: here one seems *completely* justified in inferring: "If *one* proposition is a picture, then any proposition must be a picture, for they must all be of the same nature." For we are under the illusion that what is sublime, what is essential, about our investigation consists in its grasping *one* comprehensive essence. (Wittgenstein, 1970; #444)

Disquiet in philosophy might be said to arise from looking at philosophy wrongly, seeing it wrong, namely as if it were divided into (infinite) longitudinal strips instead of into (finite) cross strips. This inversion in our conception produces the *greatest* difficulty. So we try as it were to grasp the unlimited strips and complain that it cannot be done piecemeal. To be sure it cannot, if by a piece one means an infinite longitudinal strip. But it may well be done, if one means a cross-strip. - But in that case we never get to the end of our work! - Of course not, for it has no end.

(We want to replace wild conjectures and explanations by quiet weighing of linguistic facts.) (#447)

A seed always produces a plant of the same kind as that from which it was produced - but *nothing* in the seed corresponds to the plant which comes from it; so that it is impossible to infer the properties or structure of the plant from those of the seed that comes out of it - this can only be done from the *history* of the seed. So an organism might come into being even out of something quite amorphous, as it were causelessly; and there is no reason why this should not really hold for our thoughts, and hence for our talking and writing (#608).

In general, psychotherapy process research is at least partly directed towards describing and explaining the fundamental principles of psychotherapeutic process. This pursuit of explanations sometimes leads

researchers to forget that psychotherapy is an event which occurs in a specific time, and between a specific therapist and a specific client(s). Part of the function of science is to explain general principles - to provide order and predictability for complex phenomena. The explanatory function of science is not being questioned here. What is being questioned is some researchers' tendency to reify explanations. Nowhere is this more so than in psychotherapy research. Maturana (1979) describes another approach, when he says: "The question, '*What is the object of knowledge ?*' becomes meaningless. There is no object of knowledge. To know is to be able to operate adequately in an individual or cooperative situation" (p.53).

Practitioners of therapy are similarly little inclined to be impressed by the measures of validity which persuade many researchers that their work is useful. Morrow-Bradley and Elliott (1986) surveyed the literature on the utilization of psychotherapy research and found that practitioners commonly cite the following problems with psychotherapy research: 1: The questions addressed are not clinically relevant, 2: The variables selected for study are not representative of actual clinical practice, 3: The methods and populations used are not adequately described or selected, 4: Data analyses reported for psychotherapy studies overemphasize group statistics and statistical significance, 5: Researchers make little attempt to translate and communicate their findings in a way that therapists can use. (p.188). Clearly, practitioners are expressing their dissatisfaction with psychotherapy process research.

Morrow-Bradley and Elliott are suggesting that some psychotherapy researchers have become more concerned with following certain formal methods than with the purposes those methods are designed to serve. I would suggest that one form of solution to this problem would be through returning to the exploration of the actual therapeutic event. Let us put aside the methods for a while and look at what happens in therapy. This area of research cannot suffer by adopting an exploratory as well as a sophisticated design and analysis approach. Perhaps some methods might be attempted which will not assist in the orderly accumulation of knowledge. But what purpose is served by the orderly accumulation of knowledge if we are doing little with it besides keeping the research machine running?

B The nature of this exploration

These comments represent both a polemic and an apology. The former should be self-explanatory, so I will comment on the latter. The report you have in hand is an exploration, complete with many of the successes and failures that attend to this sort of research. This investigation was initiated as an attempt to explore new territory. There will be readers who question whether this territory actually exists. Some readers may see the basic topography, but doubt that it has been adequately explored. Other readers may see the territory, follow the route through it, and be convinced that the paths not taken were more promising. For the author, these are simply the hazards and the challenges of the work.

In this report, I will attempt to explain how an initial idea evolved into a question, how the question evoked some methods, how those methods were assayed, what the methods produced, and finally how the results can be interpreted. The path through these various stages is not the shortest route. It will be necessary to describe some of the false leads, choices, and changes that were made as the work progressed. My purpose is to give the reader a fair chance to understand why I conducted this work, and how I did it. Along the way, I hope the reader develops an understanding of my perspective, and how I have inimitably formed this work. I will attempt to honestly explain how I have participated in producing this investigation, but because I am the researcher, I can not get outside myself to explain my participation as effectively as the reader. I hope the reader will make whatever observations and judgements are necessary to understand this report.

This is a doctoral dissertation. That fact establishes the basic context of this work, and no doubt bears a strong influence on all parts of it. I do not have sufficient distance from this contextual feature at this point to comment on it. This is also a doctoral dissertation in counselling psychology. I am a chartered psychologist, and I have been practicing as a therapist for the last seven years. This report originates in my interest in the theoretical and practical aspects of therapy. During the time that I have been a student at the University of Alberta, as both a master's and a doctoral student I have been very fortunate to have been involved in some fascinating changes and developments in the field of psychotherapy, particularly in the general area of systems theory oriented

therapies[1]. I have worked as a marriage and family therapist, as a supervisor of family therapy students, and as a trainer in professional family therapy settings. This work grows directly out of my experiences in those contexts, and I think I can best introduce you to the evolution of the research question by explaining some of those experiences.

In the area of systems therapy, much of the training and consultation occurs in team settings. A team of therapists observes and participates on one side of a one-way mirror while a therapist and the clients work on the other side. These situations are very interesting because one confronts again and again how differently individual therapists view the world. The discussions among teams are always lively, sometimes heated. One of the problems that frequently arises is that the therapist who is working with the client has difficulty consolidating the various ideas that the team offers. The success of this method of working often depends on the working therapist's ability to incorporate various suggestions into an integrated personal delivery. One idea has become very clear for me - there is no one right way to do therapy, ever. This is so to the extent that the word, right, seems senseless. The word, right, or others like it, such as, correct, appropriate, best, etc., inherently carries a political level of meaning. This political level refers to the nature of the interactions between conversants. This political level of meaning should not carry over into the semantic level[2], but it usually does. It should not carry over into the semantic level because at the semantic level the meanings of, right, correct, best, etc., are subject dependent. In other words, what is right for one therapist in a certain context may be different from what is right for another therapist in a similar context. At the political level of meaning it is quite possible that one member of a team may hold a position of influence such that this member may determine which therapeutic methods are right or wrong.

Although I have suggested that the semantics are subject dependent, one can observe that the various ideas and opinions of team members sometimes converge. These fortuitous coincidences typically occur when members agree that therapy is going well. We can see when therapy works, even though we

---

[1] "Systems therapies" include many schools that have been strongly influenced by general systems theories, Bateson, and Jackson.

[2] The words, political, and semantic, are being used here in the sense that they have been described by Keeney in (1985,pp.13-21).

might not have the same ideas about why it works, or how to proceed. These nodal convergences of opinion about successful therapeutic process are the general region which I set out to investigate.

More specifically, and somewhat paradoxically, it was apparent to me that these zones of consensus could not be explored without a language for describing therapists' divergent modes of constructing therapeutic process. Individual therapists clearly inhabit different worlds, and have different ways of building their experiences. The observation that we converge at times is notable because it contrasts with the more general observation that we are so clearly different. We have different histories, different lives, and different ways of doing therapy. We use different words to describe therapy, and have different ways of making sense of therapeutic process. No amount of training or working together could disguise these differences. In fact, the longer teams work together, the more familiar they become with each others' uniquely individual styles.

C The research question

So the specific question I asked was; "*How do therapists construct therapeutic process?*"; and this question was asked in the context of the general area of interest; *"What is characteristic of the nodal points of convergent expression and behavior among therapists during their discussions of successful moments in therapy?"* These moments could be called significant, or important moments; or moments when the client is described as having shifted or changed. The specific question was neither simple to formulate, nor simple to investigate. At the time when I first began thinking about moments of consensus about therapeutic process, I thought that I was inquiring about what was happening in therapy. As I pursued the general area of interest further, it became more clear that I was inquiring about how therapists construct therapeutic process in themselves, and express those constructions to others. Now that I have pursued this particular question for a distance, it is becoming clear that I am investigating how I construct therapists' constructions. The territory and the rules continue to shift with each shift.

I started this introduction with some passages from Wittgenstein's *Zettel.* I recall Dr. Heinz Von Foerster, who is Wittgenstein's nephew, saying that if a graduate student wanted a thesis topic, any one of the *Zettel* would be a good

place to begin. I have selected three, and I hope this does not mean I will do three dissertations. I started with these passages, not because of Von Foerster's suggestion, nor because Wittgenstein is central to this discussion; but because Wittgenstein's pragmatic philosophy of language provides one with a sense of the firm foundation that is required for conducting an exploration such as this. In these passages he seems to be saying that theories indicate process rather than product; that explorations generate more explorations; that we can progress in a common sense fashion by noticing how language is used; and that we can learn by tracing patterns in history.

The purpose of this investigation is to explore how therapists construct therapeutic process. This statement could be interpreted in various ways. I am intending it as a starting point for investigating patterns in therapists' descriptions of therapy. With this intention, the investigation becomes predominantly a linguistic concern. I have not begun with theoretical precepts about inferred intra-psychic or cognitive structures. This exploration is an attempt to generate and describe some patterns in the language that observer-therapists use. Of course, I have brought my history into the process of generating the distinctions. My methods for constructing events are revealed through the distinctions I generate.

I think one of the major aspects of my approach is that I attempt to follow in the style of Wittgenstein, although I will not subsequently have much to say about his way of doing philosophy. I want to use language to describe what can be described in language. This is a central feature of the constructivist approach. The purpose is to use language to clarify confusions. Confusions often result when language is required to do more than it is capable of doing. We can stop being confused by not asking questions that cannot be answered in language. Wittgenstein initiated the constructivism of language by reducing complex philosophical questions to the pragmatics of grammar: "Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of language" (1970, #55)[1]. I think this approach is overdue in discussions of therapy. Psychotherapy has been hobbled by

---

[1] Von Foerster has suggested that Wittgenstein was actually a realist. His discussion of language would be suitable for the constructivist position if we took his realist argument and "stood it on its ear". I leave the quote here because it exemplifies the method I am arguing for, although it is based on different assumptions.

arguments about beliefs that cannot be resolved in language.

The idea of staying grounded in language is basic to the conduct of this investigation. A number of factors have converged to highlight linguistic features. Most importantly, the three researchers who have had most to say about how we construct our realities, emphasize the pragmatic ontogenesis of language. Maturana's and Von Foerster's ideas have become the cornerstone for this exploration. These two, and others, have devoted considerable attention to the description of how we construct our realities through the generation of language. Bateson's descriptions of the processes of describing patterns in human behavior (punctuation) are also central to this investigation; and I have borrowed some concepts from theories of stylistics in literature.

D An outline

These various components will be described in due course. I will now briefly describe the formal outline of the procedure that was followed in this investigation. This outline is quite simple. I asked five expert systemic therapists to each select a four minute video-taped segment of therapy they had done, which illustrated a significant or important therapeutic process. I copied these segments onto one video-tape, and then asked each of these therapists to review each segment and describe what they thought were the significant processes. I tape-recorded and then transcribed their comments. I then began a recursive (repeating circular) process of reviewing the descriptions and generating patterns among them. Eventually this process stabilized, more or less, on patterns of words (lexical analysis), and patterns of behavioral, explanatory and conceptual descriptions (textual analysis). After I had experimented with various interconnections among the analyses, it was possible to construct some patterns for describing the observers' descriptions of therapeutic processes. This is the basic outline of the procedure.

The reader may observe that the procedure is based on the descriptions provided by practicing therapists, and that an attempt has been made to ground the investigation on the language that practicing therapists actually use to describe their own and each other's work. The interview format was non-standardized, as were the methods that were created for generating the patterns in the observers' descriptions. As I began describing the patterns I also began referring to theoretical constructs from constructivism (Segal, Von

Foerster, Von Glasersfeld, Watzlawick), autopoiesis (Maturana), cybernetics (Bateson, Keeney), and stylistics (Gregory). But the basic procedure was to describe how therapists construct therapeutic process by exploring the language that observer-therapists actually use.

E My participation

I would like to make one further comment before proceeding with the review of the literature. I have mentioned that as the researcher, I am also involved in this research as an observer of the observers, and therefore this report is finally my construction of my interaction with the observers' constructions. I would like to say from the outset, that the experience of participating in the research this way resulted in some remarkable experiential shifts for me. I think it is appropriate to describe one of these here in the introduction, because it is fundamental to the whole event.

I have practiced as a therapist for several years, and I have mentioned how intriguing and stimulating it can be to work in this area with other like-minded therapists. I have not mentioned that the five participants in this project are all colleagues with whom I have had varying degrees of both professional and social contact over the years. I mentioned that when I started this research I had an idea that it would be possible to get a clear picture of the consensus among these observers about the significant moments in therapy. I also had the idea that I was going to describe their constructions rather than my own.

Therefore, when I began the process of talking with them individually about what they had observed on the video-tapes I decided to restrict my involvement to asking questions for clarification. This simple decision, which I made in the interests of 'objectivity', had profound effects on the entire procedure. In retrospect I am happy that I decided to restrict my involvement the way I did, though I now think I did it for the wrong reasons. What happened was that my interactions with these therapists changed. I think the basic shift had to do with my no longer being an active participant (in the previously customary sense) with each of the observer-therapists in the process of generating descriptions of the therapeutic processes.

Normally, when two or more systemic therapists talk about a therapy session they have just observed, they share ideas about what has happened. When I removed myself from offering my opinion as I normally would have, I

began to hear the observer-therapists express ideas that were not only different from what I would have expected them to say, or from what I thought I had heard them say before; but their ideas were different from each others', in ways that I could not have anticipated, and could only later begin to express.

I am really making a general statement here about some of the specific results of this investigation. When observer-therapists talk together about therapy, they drift together in their descriptions of therapy. Very often, when therapists talk together about therapy, the political and practical aspects of doing therapy together become at least as important as the individuals' constructions of therapy. And these factors lead to interactions which disguise how divergent individual therapists' modes of constructing therapeutic processes really are. What I mean is that when therapists talk usually they are engaged in a decision-making process; e.g., what is this client's problem? how should we treat it? what is happening now? what should we do next? The effort to reach viable conclusions often means that the attainment of consensus is a priority. The attainment of consensus is a political event between people which is distinct from the individuals' constructions.

I have highlighted the political factor in order to explain why observer-therapists usually seem more convergent in their views than I found them to be when I talked to them individually. No doubt there are other reasons. I would suggest that in any normal conversation, about the weather, or whatever; the longer two people converse and interact, the more likely they are to drift together in their expressions and behavior. This suggestion is one that I have not been able to explore in this investigation, but it is one of the ideas that I have for future work now that this investigation has reached this step.

What I wanted to point out here is that once I began exploring the question, "How do observer-therapists construct therapeutic process?", according to the procedure I have described, my attention shifted from wanting to describe consensual patterns, to a desire to tease apart some of the patterns of divergence (and convergence) among therapists' descriptions. I think this shift to focusing on the aspects of divergence, marks my approach to the overall conduct of this investigation.

The remainder of this dissertation includes a review of the literature, a description of the method, a statement of the results, a discussion, and some concluding remarks.

II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A Introduction

This investigation of observer-therapists' methods for constructing therapeutic process opens some new territory and it is also grounded on research that has been conducted in the areas of psychotherapeutic process, cybernetics, radical constructivist theory, autopoiesis, anthropological research methods, and literary criticism. This investigation builds on some aspects of each of these areas, but its relation to each of these areas is primarily synthetic. In other words, the impetus for the research questions and the form of this investigation arose from a constellation of previous research in a variety of fields. This origination does not mean that this research is especially trans-disciplinary. On the contrary, this investigation focuses on psychotherapy. However, the sources and background which led to the generation of this specific form of research are diverse; and the relations between this specific research and the diverse sources are not direct.

The theoretical assumptions were largely derived from Bateson (1972, 1979), Dell (1982, 1983, 1984, 1985), Keeney (1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985), Maturana (1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1983,1986), Segal (1986), Von Foerster (1983, 1984, 1985), and Von Glasersfeld (1978, 1984). The methods were largely derived from methods for the analysis of literature, and psychotherapy case studies. The method of the inquiry involved an investigation of textual and lexical aspects of therapists' descriptions of therapy. The conjunction of theories and methods is consistent with the synthetic stages of development that have characterized the discontinuous evolution of psychotherapy research. The history of the proliferation of schools of psychotherapy over the last few decades has not followed clear geneological patterns. Certainly within the area of family therapy we have seen that personalities, idiosyncratic techniques, and ideas imported from other disciplines, have had a great influence on the development of this field. The whole area of systemic therapy originated through multi-disciplinary cross-fertilization.

I would suggest that the general area of systemic therapy has reached a stage of practical and theoretical sophistication where the resources that were provided by the seminal innovators such as Von Bertalanffy, Bateson, and

Jackson have almost been exhausted. Today the journals are full of polemic disputes which suggest that the theoretical debate has moved from generative discussion to invidious disputation. The point here is that there are good reasons for looking outside the bounds of our own technically oriented theories. Of course, this act of looking outside will mean hunting for ideas which may or may not be of any immediate relevance. There will always be those in the area of psychotherapy who question the relevance of esoteric theories. On the other hand, I would suggest that change often comes about once a certain threshold has been attained. Until this level has been attained, it may be difficult to explain how the various components will contribute to the evolution of useful new ideas. There are stages in research during which it is more appropriate to explore than to specify outcomes.

This investigation was designed as an exploration rather than as a summation. The definition of the territory to be explored resulted from the nature of certain questions that arose for me, in interaction with the community of therapists of which I am part, and in interaction with my reading of various theories, my reading of psychotherapeutic process research, and my practice of therapy. The territory which was explored in this research was not directly specified or indicated by any one specific body of research in a particular area.

Therefore, this review of the literature needs to provide some background for assisting the reader to understand the nature of the territory which was explored, and how this topography was created. Because the history of the origination of this exploration involved diverse sources, the description of the history will also be diverse. My intention is to describe some of the identifiable sources which I think are relevant to understanding how and why this investigation was initiated. I would also like to explain some of the synthetic operations which led to the generation of the specific form.

In retrospect, I realize that the particular conclusions which have been stated depend for their acceptance on the reader's acceptance of some of the initial premises. I would suggest that the particular conclusions are not designed to be replicated, or accepted as valid. The purpose of this investigation has been to describe how some ideas could be synthesized, how this synthesis could suggest a territory, and how this territory could be explored. In other words, the purpose here has been to describe the process through which the research came about and was carried out. I have been as

concerned with describing the genesis, as with describing the results. Finally, the reader may be as curious to know where I began as where I ended.

In this review of the literature, it has been difficult to determine what should be included. In terms of specific studies which directly precede this study, there are none, but I would be plagiarizing if I did not describe the many sources which have contributed to the synthetic origins.

This review is composed basically of six sections. My intention has been to describe the major philosophical components of the theories underlying this research. At the same time, I have attempted to illustrate some of the interconnecting progression of ideas that grew through the process of conducting this investigation. The first section includes some comments on some basic relevant issues and assumptions in psychotherapy process research. The second section includes a discussion of the nature of the observer; how the observer can be understood as the essential component in the construction of knowledge; and a description of first and second order cybernetics. The third section presents a short discussion of the ontology of autonomous systems. The fourth section develops some of the particular questions that systemic therapists are asking. These questions have provided a practical focus for this investigation. The fifth section provides an outline designed to assist the reader to appreciate some of the major theorists and their work. Particular attention is given to relevant aspects of constructivism, autopoiesis, and cybernetics. The last section section provides a brief discussion of the methods which have been used in this investigation.

In presenting these comments, I am forced to assume that the reader has some familiarity with the authors being discussed; or failing this, is willing to tolerate a degree of confusion while attempting to find the connecting threads between the components that are presented. Nothing I can say here will substitute for the original texts. I am simply attempting to provide a brief overview or introduction. Many of the terms which are used in this investigation are technical, and in some cases they are neologisms created by authors who originated the theories, or else by others who needed terms to categorize the theories. I have decided that rather than attempt to provide inaccurate summary definitions of these words, the reader should refer to the original texts whenever questions arise about what certain words or concepts mean.

B Issues in psychotherapy process research

In this brief review of some of the related issues in psychotherapy process research, my intention is simply to indicate how this investigation fits into the overall fabric of work that has been done in this area. Therefore, references will be made to summary and survey reports. Some comments will be made about research which is exemplary of larger patterns of work. The purpose of this section is to indicate how this investigation may be distinguished from major trends in psychotherapy research. Because psychotherapy is about helping people change, the topic of change provides a useful focus for discussing various attributes of approaches to research. Following a discussion of some general issues about methods for investigating change in psychotherapy, some more specific comments will be made about the fundamental assumptions underlying the approach used in this investigation.

My argument begins with a statement that the predominant approach to psychotherapy research is based on the following logical-empiricist concepts:

> "Therapists and researchers do not have an epistemology. They have theory (i.e. content); they do epistemology. That is, they work to correlate sensory experience with theoretical constructs and propositions. Therapists test the validity of their theories by making clinical observations (measurement) ... Researchers test the validity of their theories by operationalizing their constructs into variables (that can be measured) and by performing statistical analysis" (Shields, 1987, p.379).

This approach presumes the existence of an objectively verifiable reality. Therefore, the therapist's or researcher's relevance is as a medium for transmitting accurate information.

Second order cybernetics is described as an alternate approach which presumes that any observer essentially brings reality forth through internally generated processes of construction. Reality exists through recursive consensual coordinations of action in language. I argue for the relevance of second order cybernetics and I suggest some methods for investigating the participation of the observer in generating therapeutic reality.

The search for principles of change

Some of the major handbooks and surveys of psychotherapy process research (Garfield & Bergin, 1978; Greenberg & Rice, 1984; Greenberg & Pinsof, 1986; Lambert, 1983) begin with a focal question like; "What kinds of

therapeutic procedures will be helpful to particular patients under particular circumstances?" (Strupp, 1978, p. 7). Strupp follows this question with the statement, "Therapeutic outcomes must be reformulated as a standard scientific question: What specific therapeutic interventions produce specific changes in specific patients under specific conditions?" (Strupp, 1978). Similarly, Goldfried (1980) suggests that psychotherapy research "is currently in a state of infancy" (p.993); and that it should be directed towards "finding a meaningful consensus ... somewhere between theory and technique which, for want of a better term, we might call clinical strategies. Were those strategies to have a clear empirical foundation, it might be more appropriate to call them principles of change" (p.994). I would suggest that much current research is based on an implicit belief that "There exist certain 'timeless truths', consisting of common observations of how people change" (Goldfried, p.996), and the purpose of research is to discover these timeless truths.

Faced with the incredible complexity of describing not only therapeutic process, but also how and when it is effective, researchers have resorted to the diligent application of experimental methods. The results of many of these studies have been described as falling prey to what Kiesler (1971) called "the homogeneity myth". Greenberg and Pinsof appear to make a similar criticism when they say that many studies: "critically oversimplify complex aspects of the psychotherapeutic situation and reduce the likelihood of elucidating psychotherapy" (p.7). One of the great problems in the area of psychotherapy research continues to be the problem of creating research methods which are respectful of the complexity of therapeutic process.

Several approaches have been suggested. In the past, an uneasy distinction has often been made been process and outcome studies. In the more recent past, surveyers such as Kiesler (1973), and Parloff, Raskow, and Wolfe (1978), have suggested that useful studies of psychotherapy must incorporate measures of both process and outcome. This approach is consistent with the approach suggested by Greenberg and Pinsof (1986), who say that, "A number of trends have converged to reduce if not eradicate the distinction between process and outcome research" (p.5).

Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) suggest that the description of psychotherapy is a "punctuation of the sequence of events" (p.54). Within this concept of punctuation, "process", and "outcome" are viewed as distinctions

which are relative to the observers who create them. The psychotherapeutic event can be divided in many ways, according to the needs and beliefs of the researcher. Rice and Greenberg (1984) argue for a "process approach" to psychotherapy research that views outcome "as a fluid and continuous process that is not best measured at termination or any other single point. ... Outcome becomes a series of "little O's". ... In this view psychotherapy research is the analysis of the interactions among and within the processes that occur both outside and inside therapy sessions (Rice and Greenberg, 1984; p.7).

With the dissolution of the traditional distinctions between process and outcome, one of the current questions in psychotherapy research is about how one should punctuate therapeutic process in order to construct useful research. This question has bred considerable divergences of opinion. The approaches which have been suggested vary according to researchers' epistemological positions. There is a considerable faction which argues implicitly for a logical-empiricist approach (Scriven, 1969). This approach has been described by Manicas and Secord (1983) as involving: 1. A foundationist epistemology; which "sees scientific propositions as founded on 'data' ... hypotheses are to be tested against the 'facts'.", 2. Theories are understood to be hypothetico-deductive systems, 3. Research is more or less atheoretical, 4. A Humean conception of causality is taken for granted, 5. A full explanation is deductive-nomological. In research practice, explanations are inductive-statistical, so that one achieves a better explanation when the probability statement "predicts the dependent variable more accurately by identifying additional independent variables, by better defining the relationship among these independent variables (and) by specifying more accurately the relationship of each of the dependent variables..." (Hempel, 1963).

In current psychotherapy research, researchers who follow the logical-empiricist approach have conceded the difficulty of accurately describing the variables involved in therapeutic process: "The phenomena of therapy are like those in physics, in that they are extremely complex and interactive, with layer upon layer of structure" (Greenberg, 1986; p. 712). However they maintain that the complexity of the event simply means that we need to begin descriptively, and then advance to prediction: "Like the phenomena of physics they are best described multidimensionally by a large number of variables.... It is only once these phenomena have been reliably described and measured that the

emphasis can shift from description to explanation of phenomena, model building, and finally prediction" (Greenberg, p.712).

The current prevalence in the research community of the logical-empiricist approach to research leads Strupp to conclude that, "...every scientific effort seeks to order, simplify, condense, and control" (1978, p.20). One major consequence of this approach, in Strupp's opinion, is, "... that practitioners cannot directly profit from statistical trends in their everyday dealings with patients; they must deal with the inevitable idiosyncracies of every patient-therapist interaction" (p.20). Strupp suggests that "Researchers of the future, who must also be well-trained clinicians, must learn to work more closely with practicing therapists on vital issues encountered in everyday clinical work ... What is envisaged is a form of action research, originally proposed by Lewin (1947) ... there results a continuous and productive feedback loop in which practice inspires research, and research provides information that is relevant to practice" (p.20).

One of the ways that some researchers have attempted to increase the relevance of research has been the "smaller is better" approach. Chassan (1967; 1981) has argued against the shortcomings of the nomothetic or group approach, and in favour of the idiographic or single-case approach. This approach has found considerable acceptance in marriage and family therapy. The general area of systems (family) theory therapy necessitates intensive complex individually-tailored treatment strategies, and the descriptions of these cases are frequently inherently incompressible into discrete variables. Chassan's approach holds much in common with the phenomenological or descriptive methods that have become popular among researchers who are more interested in detailing individual cases.

Despite the popularity of descriptive investigations among clinicians, the scientific community typically prefers studies conducted according to standard experimental procedures. Editors such as Garfield and Bergin (1978) exclude references to studies which cannot be replicated. The epistemological assumption underlying these editorial choices is the idea that "The only reality we can grasp with our minds is physical reality" (Shields, 1986; p.361). With this assumption made, it is logical to conclude that "If scientists in a number of settings are able to replicate the experiment and report similar findings, then

we, as a field, are coming closer to grasping the reality we study, the physical reality of human existence" (Shields, p.361).

With this assumption made, it is also reasonable to anticipate that sufficient effort will yield the principles of change that practitioners want. As I have indicated, those who propose that we continue with the logical-empiricist methods admit that therapeutic events are difficult to quantify in full detail but there appears to be little question among them about the correctness of their epistemology. Therefore, it is not surprising that the predominant direction in psychotherapy research is "to develop more specific microtheory about the mechanisms and process of change" (Greenberg, 1986; p.9). The idea is that more research about the specifics will inevitably reveal what really exists: "Measurement has to be developed to initially capture what one thinks might be there (i.e., required by one's rational model) but then needs to be refined to capture what one actually finds (i.e., required by one's empirical model) until one is able to depict what is really there" (Greenberg, p. 721). Notice that verification depends on observation. The observer is presumed capable of perceiving the "real, objective" world, and the function of psychotherapy research is to produce results which coincide with our observations: "The observation of actual performance highlights what our measurement systems are missing" (Greenberg, p.721). Objects exist independently, but the reality of their existence must be determined by an observer.

The role of the observer in creating principles of change

It is not necessary to use objects as verifications of hypotheses. Indeed, it has been suggested that the attempt to verify hypotheses objectively is inherently contradicted by the need to use internal representations of objects to verify internal representations. Maturana suggests that everything said is said by an observer, and therefore the whole realm of objective description exists within the realm of language and explanation. Maturana is not denying the existence of an objective world, he is suggesting that we adjust the way we talk about it. He indicates that because we can not directly access the objective world, we need to shift our epistemology so that we incorporate a more accurate assumption about how we can know. He is suggesting that language is self-referential, and that we understand the world through internal self-

generating processes. The suggestion that we can not use objects as absolute references for knowing has consequences which may not be readily apparent.

If one suggests that the existence of the so-called external world is relative to an observer, then the argument for the observer method of verification becomes circular and tautological. (The observer sees what the observer sees, regardless of the mediating processes, and there is no way to absolutely specify an object outside the internal representations) The suggestion of relativism does not need to entail the problems inherent in the solipsistic argument, if one chooses also to accept that an observer functions consensually with other observers. One can posit the world of community to counter the potentially solipsistic implications of relativism. If one suggests that the existence of the external world is relative to the observer who is relative to the community of observers, then verification by observation can be reconceptualized as verification by consensus of observers (Von Foerster, in Segal, 1986; p.147). This is very different from the position that the observer can depict "what is really there". In the logical-empiricist approach, which is predicated on the existence of a real world which is independent of the observer, the observer exists in an awkward conceptual position of being both the determinator of that which is independently real, while also claiming to be unnecessary to the existence of reality. I would suggest that this bind is partially at the root of a major problem in psychotherapy research, namely; that observers often find exactly what they expect to find, and yet they must claim that their findings are independent of their participation.

Constructivism begins with different epistemological premises from those held by the logical-empiricists. This stance of course brings with it a whole new set of questions and problems. One consequence of this stance is that some of the old problems are understood differently. For example, Greenberg and Pinsof (1986) suggest that one of the major problems in psychotherapy research "is that each researcher or research team develops its own process analysis system, uses it once or twice, and then moves on to another system or abandons process research altogether. This makes it very difficult for knowledge to accumulate in any consistent fashion" (p.xii). Greenberg and Pinsof are implicitly stating that ideally, knowledge should advance through an orderly accumulation. Notice that in this view, knowledge is substantive. Notice also that Pinsof is implicitly calling for more convergence of research

methods. Pinsof is attempting to coach process researchers to persist, in an orderly convergent concerted fashion.

If knowledge is thought of as the process through which information is created (Von Foerster, in Segal,1986; p.34), then the observation about the disorderly progression of knowledge about psychotherapy process can be considered very differently. As I said, I am not going to elaborate on constructivism just here, but I will point out that in reference to Pinsof's remarks about the advancement of process research, a constructivist approach would neither imply the substantiality of knowledge, nor would it implicitly call for more convergence. On the contrary; the constructivist might suggest that knowledge does not advance in an orderly and consistent way. Observers' observations diverge because observers construct and inhabit divergent worlds, or "multiverses" (Mendez, Coddou & Maturana, 1985; p.16). The purpose of research is not to impose order, but to expose complexity.

The point here is that this investigation does not fit the pattern that is called for by Greenberg and Pinsof, or Rice and Greenberg. There are some aspects of their basic positions which concur with the position taken in this research. For example I would agree with Rice and Greenberg's statement that "The approach [to process research]... involves the intense scrutiny of particular classes of recurrent change episodes in psychotherapy, making fine-grained descriptions of these moments of change together with the patterns of client-therapist interactions that form their context" (Rice and Greenberg, 1984; p.13). But our positions diverge radically at the point they state that this approach will "enable us to grasp the essential nature of the mechanisms leading to change, and thus to illuminate change across different therapeutic situations" (p.14).

The essential difference is that in the position I am working from, the observer is understood as a crucial participant in creating that which is observed; "We are not discovering reality. We are bringing reality forth. Reality becomes ready to hand with our distinctions, becomes in the distinctions. ... Reality arises with language. Without language there is no reality" (Maturana, 1983; s.3, p.11). Although the observer brings reality forth through distinctions in language, the operations through which observers bring forth reality are not accessible as mechanisms, because the observer operates integrally through internal recursive relations of operations on operations, which are inherently nonreducible. The recursive operations through which

individuals generate knowledge is the territory of cybernetics of cybernetics. The observer system generates what we call reality in the domain of language, but the system is closed to information. It is open to perturbations, and the normal physical forces, but the nature of the world as we know it, is generated through a closed structurally determined system. There is no world "out there" to be grasped. "Perception is not a phenomenon of capture. Of course we use a language as if it were so" (Maturana, 1983; s.2, p.3). The world out there is the world we create "in here" and agree to talk about with certain words.

This is a fundamental, and important distinction between most of the work that is currently being done in psychotherapy research, and the work which is being described here. I will expand on the epistemological premises of this research in the next section. At this point, it is sufficient for the reader to observe the radical distinction between the logical-empiricist approach, and what is being generally referred to here as second order cybernetics, or the study of the processes through which the observer generates knowledge. In the former, neither the observer, nor language figure as essential variables in the process of knowing. In the latter, the observer, and the observer's operations in language are central. This difference has extensive implications. One of these is that while this research may seem very similar in some respects to other forms of research, these similarities are constituent of very different structures.

The epistemology on which this research is based is not very different from that which is maintained by many practicing therapists. For example, Carl Roger's concept of subjective phenomenological reality is similar. The notion that the individual inhabits a privately constructed reality is central to many of the commonly accepted idiographic principles of therapy. Consider Milton Erickson for instance, who was noted for saying that he invented a new method for working with each client. The constructivist position is useful for the description of psychotherapeutic process because it provides a foundation for a coherent explanation of the idiographically based principles of practice that are already established.

C The epistemology of the observer

Punctuation

Bateson's concepts of epistemology are central to the conduct of this research. Dell (1985) has isolated five important distinct ways that Bateson used the word epistemology, and he suggests that one of the problems with understanding what Bateson meant by epistemology was that everything seemed to be an aspect of epistemology. The distinctions between the various ways that Bateson used the word do not need to be distinguished here. The major idea that is relevant to this research is the aspect of epistemology that relates to the concept of punctuation. Punctuation is the basic tool in cartography. Cartography is the metaphor for the process through which we distinguish what we call reality. Bateson suggests that the territory is out there, and is inaccessible in itself. We represent the territory mentally, to ourselves. In this metaphor, we relate to maps of the territory. The process of distinguishing that which we represent on our internal maps is the process of punctuation. No doubt, a cartographic metaphor, such as projection, would be preferable to the grammatical one, but the notion of punctuation has already become a well used component in the theoretical language of systems therapy.

Just as sentences change meaning according to how they are punctuated, our understanding of experience varies according to how we organize it. We can not not organize our experience. Every perception, memory, thought, or experience has organizational identity in relation to all the other components of our experience.

Distinctions

The process of distinguishing what we know is tantamount to the process of creating the world. G. Spencer-Brown in *Laws of Form,* (1969) suggests that the basic epistemological act is drawing a distinction. The concept of punctuation could be said to pertain to the varieties of distinctions that we draw. Spencer-Brown's idea that drawing a distinction is the first step we make in knowing, is similar to Bateson's concept of information. Bateson suggested that an elemental bit of information is a difference. We generate information when we notice difference. Information emerges through a binocular process of comparison. We compare our experience with other experience in time and

space. The concept of the binocular generation of information is central to this research and it is a concept which will be discussed subsequently.

The elemental bits of information that arise through distinction, or perception of difference become organized into coherent features on our representational maps. Bateson's methods for punctuating information have to do with circularity, and the systemic interconnection of events. This approach is closely connected to his concept of the immanence of mind; a concept which has led many of his followers to speak of him as an ecologist. Bateson's interest in the inter-relatedness of events led him to explore the patterns of organization in primitive societies, and the patterns of organization in families. Keeney, in *Aesthetics of Change* (1983) clearly illustrates how Bateson's cybernetic epistemology has become the foundation for the changes that have generated the field of systemic therapy.

Orders of epistemological analysis

Bateson (1972) found that when he explored the patterns of behaviour in primitive societies, he organized levels and classifications of descriptions. The two classifications he used were form and process; and the three levels included actions, interactions, and choreography. Keeney (1983) has labelled these levels as behaviour, context, and metacontext. The descriptions of form relate to the descriptions of process in much the same way that names for classes relate to names for the members of the classes. The following chart illustrates this scheme.

Orders of Epistemological Analysis

Order of recursion	Classification of form	Description of process
	Categories of choreography	
Metacontext		Descriptions of choreography
	Categories of interaction	
Context		Descriptions of interaction
	Categories of action	
Behavior		Descriptions of simple action

This whole system simply indicates Bateson's retrospective understanding of the process that he followed when he attempted to make sense of the patterns of interaction in the societies he was investigating. He described this process as an epistemology because it was a method for punctuating experience. This is not a prescriptive epistemology, it is a descriptive one. It is Bateson's description of how he first noticed simple behaviours, then formed those behaviours into categories, then noticed patterns of interactions between the simple behaviours, and then he categorized, or created conceptual descriptions for those interactions, and then he noticed the interactions between interactions, and formed conceptual categories for those. Finally, he could say that the patterns he described in a society illustrated his method for organizing, or punctuating his experience of the society. He found that he followed this same basic process and form of punctuation in all his investigations

This tri-level scheme has been very useful for assisting family therapists to understand how they organize their experiences of working with families. I have borrowed Bateson's scheme for this investigation in order to guide my punctuation of my experience of observers' descriptions. Notice that this is a generic scheme and that it might describe an observer's punctuation of any level of description. So for example, Bateson the anthropologist might have followed this pattern at a societal-behavioural level when describing tribal organization; and Bateson the biologist might have followed the same process and form of punctuation at a phylogenetic-biological level when describing the biological organization of the individual people who composed tribal society.

I could also have followed any of a variety of methods for punctuating the information that I gathered in this research. In fact, I have modified Bateson's scheme in order to better describe the patterns that I felt were important in the information that became available. However, fundamentally, the basic scheme of my punctuation is quite similar to Bateson's. I had the advantage of having knowledge of a scheme, or syntactical pattern prior to beginning the investigation whereas Bateson's scheme evolved through his growing recognition of the patterns of punctuation that he was creating during his investigations. I would suggest that the most interesting aspects of the form that this investigation took will not become apparent for me until time has

passed and I have had the opportunity to compare this work with my perspective in the future. The reader, who has not been part of creating this form has the advantage of being able to see it more clearly.

Transferability of the analytic scheme

Bateson's orders of epistemological analysis are generic and transferable to any level of analysis. In the case of this investigation, I found that I was following a tri-level punctuation of form and process at each of three levels of analysis, and across each of two basic types of analysis. So for example, one type of analysis concerned the lexical patterns and the other type concerned the textual patterns. In general, the analysis of each type involved distinctions of specific components, the interactions between the specifics, and the characterization of types of interactions. At each of the three levels, I distinguished the forms of the components and the processes connecting the components. The tri-level zig-zag ladder begins with the specification of the form of the elemental components, and then zigs across to the processes connecting the components and then zags back to the form of interactions and then zigs back to the processes connecting the forms of interaction, and so on through the third level. This scheme is relatively easy to comprehend from a uni-dimensional perspective of ascension and descension on the ladder. It is more to difficult to comprehend that at each level there is a horizontal plane of analysis that effectively adds two dimensions. In practice, I did not distinguish all the relations on a three-dimensional grid, but the on close observation some of these three-dimensional relations are apparent.

For example, from a vertical perspective, the words that therapist-observers used were in themselves the simple elemental components; the textual patterns composed the interactional level; and the analysis of metaphor and style composed the choreographic level. If we move across the grid horizontally, then it is possible to see that words can be analyzed according to the types of words, the relations between the types of words, and the relations between the relations between the types of words. For example, after conducting extensive word counts I distinguished categories of words and the relations between the categories. Following this, I analyzed the collocational sets, or in other words the relations between the categories of words.

As I have suggested, this three-dimensional analysis was only sketched, or exemplified. My intention here is to indicate that I followed Bateson's scheme both as an overall structure, and as a way for structuring the analysis of each of the levels. I did not carry out extensive analyses at all levels. The basic idea here is that Bateson's and Keeney's orders of epistemological analysis can be used at whatever level of analysis one choses to investigate. This structure is appropriate for macro and micro-systemic analyses. In practice, the application of the analytic form is limited only because one must chose to begin the analysis at a certain point, and stop at another point.

Linear and circular patterns of description

The great advantage of Bateson's analytic structure is that it comprehends both linear and circular patterns of organization. In recent years, much of the polemic surrounding the application of Bateson's ideas to systemic family therapy has been about whether particular theories of therapy are properly based on circular logic. In effect, proponents of systemic therapy have suggested that cybernetic theories should reveal the circular interconnections of behaviours and communications. For example, the systemic therapy which has been described by Selvini-Palazzoli, Cecchin, Prata, and Boscolo (1978) and those who follow this model (Tomm, 1984, 1985), is directed largely towards revealing patterns of organization in client systems. Currently (1987), Tomm's group is developing methods in which the conversational interview itself is the primary intervention. The primary technique is a form of circular questioning.

Tomm's methods are based on a position that circular logic does not impose a formal punctuation. Tomm focuses on the process column of Bateson's orders of epistemological analysis. The problem-solving strategic approaches (Haley, 1978; Weakland, Segal & Fisch, 1982) are apparently based on a different view of systemic logic. The problem-solving theorists focus on the formal column of Bateson's analytic structure. These theorists deliberately punctuate their perceptions of process and create ideas about the problematic patterns. The problem-solving therapists can be seen as more directly organizing and manipulating information into certain patterns. They are agents of change, whereas Tomm would prefer to understand himself as a participant.

Keeney's descriptions of Bateson's theory suggests that Bateson never intended such a dichotomous separation between form and process. Keeney suggests that Bateson's theory indicated an aesthetic integration of form and process. The zig-zag ladder is intended as an integrated description of how we create knowledge. The process of creation involves aspects of linear description, and aspects of circular description. Elements can be scrutinized reductionistically, and the relations between elements can be scrutinized systemically. One can further examine the elements microscopically in terms of their internal organization, and one can view the same elements macroscopically in terms of how they compose larger organizations. The aesthetic analysis degenerates when one level of analysis overtakes the entire perspective.

I have adopted an integrated aesthetic perspective in this investigation. The lexical analysis is reductionistic in many ways. At the same time, the presentation of the patterns of words that observers used suggests patterns of relations between the words. These patterns of relations are circular. The descriptions of these patterns of relations are formal. Formal organization is a stage of analysis which in itself reduces the patterns to simple names. Therefore, the formal description of patterns of relations is reductionistic, while the description of the elements which compose the items in relation is an expansive activity. This is the peculiar nature of the description of form and process. A description of a process is a reductionist description of an element, yet the act of naming the element is an expansionary move because it brings the element into the realm of the possibilities of existence. In this sense, the descriptions of elemental processes can be viewed both as reductionist and as systemic activities. Similarly, the description of forms, or patterns of relations, is most visibly a systemic activity, and yet at the same time, the choice of punctuation reduces the patterns to a certain name. The important point here is that Bateson's scheme comprehends linear and circular analysis at every level of perspective.

Bateson's scheme indicates that we can not not punctuate or organize experience. For example, the theorists who emphasize circular questioning influence the structure of information that is created, if only through the nature of the questions that they ask. During inter-session discussions of therapy, these therapists organize hypotheses, which, while being flexible, nevertheless

illustrate organizational states. The problem-solving oriented theorists are more overt about the organizational patterns that they create. Watzlawick, Bavelas, and Jackson (1967), and Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) have described how Logical Type Theory (Whitehead & Russell, 1910) can be used to distinguish classes of behaviours and membership in those classes. Logical Type Theory provides therapists with a structure for distinguishing simple actions and the classes which comprehend those actions, and these class structures permit therapists to create interventions which operate at levels of interaction which will have maximal impact over classes of action.

I will not elaborate on the theory of first and second order changes here. My point is that regardless of whether therapists attempt to avoid or utilize deliberate formal punctuations of events, it is inevitable that they will organize events. Organization involves static distinctions of elements and processes. Systemic description is an ongoing process of distinguishing elements, processes, and relations. The position being described here is that the debate about the relative merits of circular and systemic logics can be resolved by considering both of these as components of an integrated epistemological process.

Second order cybernetics

The debate about circular and linear epistemologies can be resolved through integration of the two methods for punctuation. The integration of these two styles of punctuation (and there are many others) leaves unanswered the question about how to understand the participation of the observer who creates these styles of punctuation. The latter question requires another level of investigation. Linear and circular punctuations represent particular descriptions of the productions of observers. One can also investigate how these productions arise. For example, a systems therapist who describes a session that she has conducted will describe the interactions of the client system, and her interactions with the client system. While the therapist creates this description, the therapist is involved in the creation of knowledge. In other words, the process of description represents another level of knowing that is removed from the therapeutic event itself. This process of description can be between the therapist and herself, such as when she writes her case-notes; or it can occur between the therapist and others, such as her peers or

supervisor. If the therapeutic event is considered as the first order of knowing, then the subsequent descriptive process can be considered as the second order.

The theory of the observer, or second order cybernetics, has only recently been recognized by the psychological community, and systemic therapists in particular, very few questions have been asked which build on this foundation (Colapinto, 1985; Dell, 1985; Efran & Lukens, 1985; Keeney, 1983; Segal, 1986; Simon, 1985; Von Glasersfeld, 1984; Watzlawick, 1984). The idea of second order cybernetics is difficult to define precisely. In a book entitled, *Cybernetics of Cybernetics*, prepared by students of Von Foerster, there is a demonstration of a wide diversity of approaches. Norbert Wiener (1947) defined cybernetics as "the science of communication and control in the animal and machine". Stafford Beer (1974) suggests that, "Today, a more general definition of cybernetics might be preferred: the science of effective organization". In the context of the language of systemic psychotherapy, Keeney (1983) suggests that:

> ...simple cybernetics includes terms such as homeostasis, stability, circular organization, or coherence ... cybernetics of cybernetics provides us with additional terms which point to patterns we were not able to clearly discern with simple cybernetics. Autonomy, for example, is proposed as a term for the distinctive wholeness or identity of a system rather than simple cybernetic terms... Autonomy more clearly specifies that we are referring to an upper limit with regard to a system's homeostasis of homeostasis, stability of stability, or coherence of coherence (p.99).

Von Foerster defines first order cybernetics as "the cybernetics of observed systems", and second order cybernetics as "the cybernetics of observing systems" (1974, 1986, p.1). In the case of this investigation, I am borrowing the term second order cybernetics to refer to the patterns of organization through which observer-therapists organize their experiences of therapy. At the same time, the organization of this investigation has been constructed so as to reveal its own organization. Therefore the whole of this presentation is itself exemplary of a second order cybernetic description. For the most part, the understanding of the nature of this description is an activity which must be completed by the reader.

Theoretically, "Observers can observe themselves and observe themselves observing themselves in an infinite recursive process" (Rebitzer

and Rebitzer, in Von Foerster, 1986, p.454). From this theoretical perspective one could distinguish many levels of cybernetics. However, in practical terms, it is difficult for the observer to go beyond observing the observer as part of the system being observed. Tomm (1986) describes four orders of recursion, the last of which amounts to self-awareness, or self-observation. Regardless of how one categorizes the orders of description, the central idea in the meaning of second order cybernetics, as it is being used here, is the inclusion of the description of the observer in the description. Tomm (1986, p.375) describes how this idea applies to the description of therapy:

> How and what a therapist comes to know and "believe" about a family (however momentarily, in the form of a fleeting hunch or a hypothesis) is a crucial element of the therapeutic process. It is this "knowledge" that forms a basis for the moment-to-moment actions of a therapist with a particular family. To leave the process of generating this knowledge out of a theory of family therapy would seriously jeopardize its explanatory power.

The basic idea that Tomm is describing is not unfamiliar to systemic therapists. Indeed the character of the debate during the last decade over epistemological concerns related to Bateson's work has largely been about how therapists or theorists organize their observations about therapy. In this sense the debate has been germane to second order cybernetics. The subject area has emerged naturally through the course of the discussion about systemic therapy.

Epistemological issues have become devisive. The consequences of these discussions are of obvious practical relevance. For example, MacKinnon, (1987, p.144) who had been a member of Tomm's group, argues from a feminist perspective that:

> Perhaps nothing could more easily provoke feminist criticism than the new epistemologists' dismissal of the concept of power. Power, as understood within the cybernetic paradigm, is a linear construct. To ask whether or not power exists, is an epistemologically irrelevant question (Keeney, 1983)... From a feminist viewpoint, the Milan interviewing methodology may be all too successful in reducing blame, thereby creating a "reality" in which all family members appear to be equally responsible. This becomes most problematic in situations such as incest, child abuse, and wife battering, where the problem may be maintained in part by a family member's socially sanctioned, compassionate view of the perpetrator. If women and children are understood to be contributing equally to these situations and if therapists remain compassionate

> towards the perpetrator, the therapists may avoid directly opposing the abusive behaviour and fail to guarantee the safety of the woman or child.

The issue under discussion here is not about the particular content of MacKinnon's remarks. The point is that the nature of a therapist's or theorist's epistemology (method for organizing knowledge) is now being described as having direct practical relevance. I would suggest that if one wanted to debate the specific contents of MacKinnon's charge, it would be necessary to propose a description of how she is organizing her thoughts about how Tomm and others are organizing their thoughts about therapy. A second order cybernetic analysis could include a discussion of the obviously divergent modes of construction revealed by Tomm and MacKinnon. Such a discussion might be developed through the use of terms derived from the Milan school of "Systemic" therapy because they are themselves using those terms. One might also choose to develop a different punctuation. So far as I have determined there is no prespecified generally accepted language for second order cybernetics.

Bateson illustrated one classificatory scheme for a second order cybernetics in the orders of epistemological analysis described above, and because this is one of the few available systems for describing the cybernetics of the observer, it has become the basis for the organization of this research. However, this is only one structure, and it is very general in nature. It is useful principally because it illustrates a hierarchy of punctuation of form and process which has proven useful for therapists. This structure says little about the nature of the components which are distinguished; and it says little about the the specific hierarchies of distinctions that are used by therapists who are working to promote change. These aspects need to be developed, and I have attempted to explore some possibilities in this investigation.

Von Foerster and Maturana have addressed more specifically the properties of self-organizing systems, and for this reason their theories of the epistemology of the observer are crucial additions to the work of Bateson. In order to properly discuss the epistemological processes of the observer it is necessary to enter the discussion of ontology. This is because Von Foerster and Maturana are suggesting that any construction of the world, or any knowledge is inherently built out of the internal processes in the observer. Thus, a description of second order cybernetics is fundamentally an ontological

question. We need to ask about the nature of the being of the observer which underlies the phenomenon of the creation of knowledge.

D The ontology of autonomous systems

The question of how individual observers are organized so that they can create knowledge can be addressed from many perspectives. The approach I am taking here has been chosen because it answers some of the practical problems of describing the activities engaged in by observer-therapists in their descriptions xof therapeutic processes. I have suggested that two major issues in research in systems therapy process concern the unpredictability of behaviours and therapists' ability to use varying methods with equal success. I have suggested that these two issues indicate that some exploration is required to find methods for explaining these difficult aspects of therapy.

The pursuit of a method for organizing information about therapy led to a consideration of a hierarchical cybernetic scheme which includes circular descriptions of relations, and elemental descriptions of processes. The suggestion that this scheme is one possible representation of how an observer organizes information leads to the question of how to approach the generic investigation of how observers generate information. To answer this question it is useful to conceive of the the individual as a system that generates information internally. "Every biological organism both has and *is* a way of knowing" (Dell, 1985,p.5). "Living as a process, is a process of cognition. This statement is valid for all organisms, with and without a nervous system" (Maturana, 1982,p.18). "It is the circularity of its organization that makes a living system a unit of interactions, and it is this circularity that it must maintain in order to remain a living system" (Maturana, 1970, p.9). If the organization of a living system is circular, then that organization is a *closed* organization - not thermodynamically closed, but organizationally closed. The significance of organizational closure is that it directly implies autonomy (Dell, 1985, p.6).

Organizational closure also requires that organisms be conceived as structurally determined. "What he means by this is that the behavior of all composite unities, whether they be living systems or inanimate objects, are fully determined by their structures (i.e., by the components of the unity and by the relations among those components)" (Dell, p. 7). The idea of structure determinism contradicts the idea of causal determinism. Systems are seen to

generate their own responses, rather than being caused to respond by external inputs. In the place of inputs, Maturana refers to triggers, and distinctions. Bateson refers to differences and distinctions. In both cases, the organism is conceived as responding according to internal recursive processes of relations of productions. These processes are determined by the history of interactions which the organism as undergone.

Because objects can not be used to verify the reality of the reality we generate, ontology refers only to the recursive relations of production in a system. Our reference to these relations of production occurs in the domain of language. Language allows a system of interactions between organisms which encourages us to act as though an objective world existed independently of our production. Maturana and Von Foerster demonstrate that autopoietic and constructivist explanations can be used to describe the ontogenesis of language. An ontogenetic analysis demonstrates the complex histories of interactions within and among organisms which generate language, while acknowledging that language enables us to speak and act as though we can verify the realness of an independently existing objective world.

Maturana and Von Foerster argue that objects exist through our recurrent interactions with them. Gradually, we develop stable interactions, and we give those interactions names. A child manipulates a rattle in various ways until a rattle-like behaviour emerges, and then the rattle acquires a name. The rattle can be said to exist through the history of recurrent interactions between the child and the rattle, in the medium in which the child exists. It is possible that a rattle dropped into the jungle might be incorporated by the natives as a location marker, or body ornament. The only ontological substrate which Von Foerster and Maturana refer to is that which we create through distinctions in language.

Clearly there is a realm of experience that exists outside language. Experience exists as such until we describe it, and then it becomes linguistic. Maturana suggests that the function of science is to explain, and that we do not need explanations in order to exist. Equally, we do not need language to experience. The implication is that there is much we can not talk about. That which we can talk about, exists through the distinctions we specify in language, in coordination with our interactions in the domains in which we exist. There is no absolute ontological foundation beyond that which we generate and describe in language.

Some of the basic principles of these theories are radically different from the vast traditional body of psychological theory. I can not present a thorough defense of the theories of self-generating systems, and I would like to suggest that there will be many arguments with the ideas that are presented here. No doubt my presentation will leave many gaps and raise many questions that can only be answered by referring to the original theories. I would suggest that these theories have been carefully constructed, and therefore any doubts that are raised by my presentation probably have more to do with the brevity of this discussion than with any deficiencies in the original theories.

E Issues related to systemic therapy

The question of how to conduct research in psychotherapy has been very difficult to answer. Each theoretical approach to psychotherapy has generated questions and methods which have meaning within the approaches from which they were developed. Systemic therapists have developed therapeutic methods for helping individuals or associations of individuals to change problematic patterns of behaviours These methods are directed towards producing radical discontinuous changes. Systemic therapists attempt to intervene in ways which alter the essential unifying patterns of problem behaviour. The changes which result often seem unconnected with either the previous behaviours or the interventions. The absence of apparent logical progression allows these changes to be described as discontinuous and non-sequential.

The nature of discontinuous changes, and how they can be brought about, has been well discussed elsewhere (Hoffman, 1981; Selvini-Palazzoli, Cecchin, Prata & Boscolo,1978; Sherman & Fredman, 1986; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974). The concern here is the questions that these systemic theories and therapeutic methods have raised for researchers. I would like to indicate three major issues or questions which warrant attention.

Unpredictability

The first question has to do with the nature of discontinuous changes. One of the first things a systemic therapist learns is that the behaviours which occur in therapy are unpredictable. A therapist may orchestrate a deliberate

intervention and then find that the clients change in totally unexpected ways. Indeed, one basic tenet is that therapists can not predict how clients will respond to interventions. It seems that each interaction changes the states of the participants so that consequent interactions can not be foretold. Systemic therapists have recognized unpredictability as a basic operational presence, and yet this presence continues to be a disruptive influence. Unpredictablility has been tacitly accepted rather than openly incorporated. For many therapists it continues to be an insidious enemy, as Efran and Lukens (1985) explain:

> "When you talk to therapists on the front lines ... While these workers may have the feeling that therapy sometimes 'works', they often have as much trouble accounting for their successes as their failures, and consequently not even successes yield a reassuring sense of predictability or consistency. This frustrating unpredictability is a prime contributor to therapists' premature burnout" (p.24).

The question about how to integrate the experiential evidence of unpredictability into a theory for systemic psychotherapy has been a difficult one to answer. Of more importance here are the consequences of unpredictability for research in psychotherapeutic process. I would suggest that some aspects of autopoiesis and constructivism are well suited for addressing these consequences. In particular, the aspect of Maturana's theory which refutes the notion of instructive interaction is important. He suggests that A's behaviour can only trigger or select a response in B. A does not cause B to respond in a certain way. B is structure determined. B generates information internally as a closed system. At the same time, B's behaviour can only trigger a response in A.

Von Foerster's descriptions of trivial and non-trivial machines are also good illustrations of the distinction between predictable and unpredictable organisms. The trivial machine is a formalism (conceptual analogue) for a computational device which always behaves perfectly understandably and predictably. A non-trivial machine is one in which some of the inputs change the hidden internal state of the operator in the machine. When this occurs, a limited number of inputs can create an incomprehensible and unpredictable sequence of outputs (Von Foerster, in Segal,.1986, pp.97-104).

If people are conceptualized as informationally closed systems, then the interactions which occur between them do not have prespecified instructive

value to the participants. The values or meanings of the interactional behaviours are determined by the individual entities. These meanings shift according to the internal structural changes within each of the individuals. This perspective precludes predictability. The focus of the investigation of interactions shifts to methods and concepts which will enable us to describe how meaning is generated within the individual. The paradoxical effect of this focus is that it shifts back to the exploration of the social context. The specific internal structures of each individual are impossible to determine, so one has to observe the behaviours which are generated. The observation of behaviours must include a method for describing the participation of the observer in creating the observed behaviours.

The descriptions of individuals' internal structural generations of meaning are cybernetic descriptions. By this I mean that cybernetics, as developed in the area of psychology, is the description of the circular processes of information generation. The descriptions of cybernetic processes which include descriptions of the observer's participation in creating these descriptions can be described as the cybernetics of cybernetics, or second order cybernetics. Second order cybernetics is the science of observing systems. "Everything said is said by an observer to another observer (who could be himself)". In other words, in order to describe how individuals construct the world and interact with each other, the describer must also have a method for describing how the describer participates in creating the systems and interactions which are described. Predictability is merely an aspect of a certain way of describing behaviours. Predictability is not a necessary consequence of the observation of systems. In fact, it is possible that by looking for diverse and complex modes of mutability in systems, the utility of predictability as an explanation will be reduced.

Multiplicity of therapeutic methods

A second major issue which systemic therapists have recognized is that therapy may be conducted in many different ways. For example, during live peer-team supervision it is common for team members to express different ideas about how the therapist who is working with the client should proceed. Similarly, it is well accepted among problem-solving oriented therapists such as Haley, Selvini-Palazzoli, Watzlawick, etc., that when one tactic or

intervention does not lead to the desired outcome, then another tactic is attempted. In other words, the only way to determine whether the correct intervention has been used is by observing the outcome. It is well known that individual therapists have their own preferences and styles. The recognition that there is no one right way to do therapy is common among practitioners, and it has been incorporated into the theory of practice. However, this recognition has been very difficult to incorporate into a coherent theory of psychotherapy. From a pragmatic problem-solving perspective it is possible to say that a therapist simply keeps trying something different until something works. One could argue that all therapists follow certain principles of change, but we are not sufficiently sophisticated to measure the specific differences between therapists. These responses to the issue of the multiplicity of functional therapeutic methods do not provide an adequate theoretical explanation.

I would suggest that there are some basic aspects of constructivism which directly address a theoretical explanation of our experience that there are different ways to accomplish the same results. Von Glasersfeld (1984) uses the example of the ship pilot who negotiates through unknown water. Once through a channel he knows he has found a right course, but he also knows that other courses may also have worked. Similarly, the burglar knows that more than one key may fit the same lock. Von Glasersfeld is suggesting that our reality is constructed according to what fits. We can never ascertain a match. He suggests we only run up against reality when something does not fit. Lack of fit initiates an adjustment process. This process of adjustment ceases when we can continue with whatever task is at hand. The radical constructivist notion of fit and match provides a conceptual form for therapists' experience of multiple correct alternatives.

The exploratory stage

The third major issue which I will discuss has to do with the question of how to conduct research. This issue is raised because the two previous questions are not questions that can be answered empirically at this time. In order to answer these questions, new theoretical foundations have to be constructed. In this research, I have suggested some of these foundations, but further exploration is required. In other words, the questions which are raised

by the recognition of unpredictability and multiple correct therapeutic methods can not yet be answered with formalized or standardized methods. These questions indicate a need for exploratory research. There is a need to explore therapists' experiences, and there is a need to explore the theories which can be used to describe their experiences. For these reasons I have chosen to follow an investigative and synthetic method which is similar to the approach described above that Bateson used in his anthropological studies.

F Cybernetics, constructivism, and autopoiesis

This section includes a brief discussion of some aspects of cybernetics, constructivism, and autopoiesis, which are relevant to the investigation at hand. These are major theories, so no attempt will be made here to describe them in detail. The purpose of this section is to provide a context in which to understand the terminology, concepts, and approach taken in this research.

Background

The theories which are being considered here could more accurately be considered as the products of individual authors, or groups of authors. "Autopoiesis" is a neologism coined by Maturana, Varela and Uribe to describe the concepts that they were developing while working together in Chile during the 1960's. The word was created from 'auto' (as in autonomous), and 'poiesis' (creation, production). They designed the word as a formalism, without a previous history, which could be used in the place of 'circular organization' in their descriptions of living systems. (Maturana, Varela & Uribe, 1979). Although there are several researchers working with the concept of self-organizing living systems (Zeleny, 1981) Maturana will be described as the proponent of autopoiesis. Maturana also developed some of his ideas while working at the Biological Computer Laboratory, an interdisciplinary research laboratory which had been organized in 1958 by Heinz Von Foerster at the University of Illinois.

The word 'constructivism' is a categorical term with limited meaning. The word has been used to describe theories presented by a variety of authors from Kelly, to Piaget, Von Glasersfeld, and Von Foerster. Von Foerster claims that the word 'constructivism' began to be used to describe his writing after he presented a lecture and published a paper entitled, *On constructing a reality*

(first published in 1973). In this investigation I use the words constructivism and constructivist to refer to Von Foerster's and Von Glasersfeld's work. These terms are merely general reference words. Von Foerster has never described his own work as constructivism (personal communication). Von Glasersfeld could be considered a proper constructivist because he refers to his own theory as radical constructivism. Both Von Glasersfeld, and Von Foerster are included in a text edited by, and including a chapter written by Watzlawick, entitled, *The Invented Reality* (1984). Von Foerster's papers have been collected in *Observing Systems* (1984). Many of the references to Von Foerster's work in this investigation, have been taken from Segal's edition of Von Foerster's seminar presentations, *The Dream of Reality* (1986).

The term 'cybernetics' is being used in the context of this investigation to refer primarily to Bateson's work. This is, of course, a gross misappropriation of the word, but it is one that has largely been accepted among systemically oriented therapists. Von Foerster has explained that the current use of the word 'cybernetics' started with Norbert Wiener's book entitled, *Cybernetics* (1948). Shortly after this, Von Foerster, who had originally been informed in 1949 about the Macy Conference by Bateson, suggested to the Macy Foundation Conference, that the word 'cybernetics' be used as the title for the conference in place of 'Circular Causal and Feedback Mechanisms in Biological and Social Systems'. The word, as Von Foerster (1986) explains it, is a metaphor for all that the participants at the conference were working on, and Bateson was one of these participants. The word 'cybernetics' is being used in this study principally, for lack of a better word, to refer to Bateson's theories. Bateson's work can be identified with this word, provided one recalls that he is only one among many who have contributed to this area.

The use of theories derived from other disciplines

The theoretical framework in this investigation is basically built out of parts borrowed from each of the three previous authors. Each of these authors have had enormous effect on many disciplines. Indeed, they have all indicated their refusal to accept the normal boundaries of disciplined study. In other words, the products of their efforts can not be summarized, or briefly described. Each of these authors is also infamous for being difficult to understand. Part of this is due to the fact that they are trying to explain ideas which conflict with our habits

of language use; and part is due to the immense intellectual scope of their discourses. In any case, I do not purport to understand these authors sufficiently to review their work. In reading these works, I have been more than usually aware that the understanding I derive, is my derivation. I would suggest that the value of these authors is not essentially in what they have said, but in the sense that the reader can create. They were innovators, and I believe they demand the reader to continue innovating. The mere process of interacting with their ideas results in changes in the reader, and it is these changes that are notable.

I am not suggesting that there can be no standards for judging the qualitative differences between interpretations of their work. I am suggesting that if such standards were devised, they should have to do with the inherent qualities of the interpretations. Part of these qualities would have to do with the nature and quality of the reader's application - that is, what has been done with these ideas. It is in this spirit that I have attempted to use these authors' ideas as stimuli for my own activity. I have attempted to explore an area which has not been investigated, and which my understanding of some of their ideas indicated would be worth exploring. I have also attempted to explore how some of my understanding of their ideas could help in making sense of the territory that was being explored. This is truly a work in progress, and the product you have is merely a momentary consolidation.

None of the principle theorists whose work has been used in this investigation are psychologists. Bateson, for instance, started as a biologist. The entire field of systemic therapy was largely instigated by Bateson. His investigations led him from anthropology, to the study of communications in dolphins, to the patterns of communication in schizophrenogenic families. As the field of systems, or family therapy grew, more of Bateson's ideas on biology and epistemology were included. The foundations of systemic therapy were largely borrowed from research done in other disciplines than psychology. Von Bertalanffy, the general systems theorist was a biologist. This tradition of borrowing ideas from other disciplines continues. "Toward the end of his life, Bateson was asked who else was carrying forward the study of the epistemology of Creatura. In reply, Bateson stated that 'the center for this study is now in Santiago, Chile under a man named Maturana'"(Keeney,1985;p.5). Maturana was first trained in medicine, before devoting himself to

neurophysiology. Stafford Beer (1975) suggested that Maturana eventually created the discipline of "psychocyberbioepistemics" (p.4); but Von Foerster suggests that Maturana prefers to be known as a "neurophilosopher".

However the disciplines are labeled, the point is that systems therapists have always sought and are still seeking new ways from outside disciplines to explain and advance their practice. The field of systemic therapy is being pressed with new challenges which require new ways for understanding. Minuchin (1986; p. xi) asks:

> What is the territory we have conquered?
> It's not so big. There are hills, but there is no high ground for miles. When we all gather on the plateau, we feel that success of our numbers; but the original epistemological challenge has been replaced by strategic caucuses. Our circular questioning is gathering more and more information - about smaller and smaller circles. ...
> Is our concern properly bounded by families, or should we expand to include broader contexts? What units are most appropriate for our inquiry?...
> Carlos Sluzki (1985) suggests: "We treat the family because we see the family and we see the family because we evoke the family with our models and our inquiry. People live ... in multiple, complex, evolving networks, of which we 'extract' the family by means of asking ... 'Who is in your family?'" (p.1).

As therapists and theorists of therapy, we need outside stimulation in order to find new ways to help people change. We can too easily become caught in the bind that Maturana describes: "A system is not blinded by its own rules; it is blind. Because it is closed. If we are in a system of beliefs, everything we do is confirmatory of the beliefs of which we are part" (1983; s.4, p.9). It is difficult to get out of this bind, except through creating increased flexibility of explanation. Von Foerster's ethical imperative describes the exploratory attitude which is designed to expand our horizons of explanation, that has been adopted in this investigation: "Act always so as to increase the number of choices" (Von Foerster, 1984; p.308). Von Foerster also indicates something of the method for doing this, in his aesthetical imperative: "If you desire to see, then learn how to act" (1984; p.308).

The point I have been trying to make in the last few paragraphs is that in this investigation, I have attempted to increase the number of choices that I, or the reader has for understanding therapeutic process. I have attempted to see

what was happening by actually engaging with the descriptions that observers provided. As I did this, my perspective changed, I saw different patterns, and then I looked for different ways to explore those patterns, and then the patterns changed again, and so on. As I did this, I referred to theories, and practices of observers in different fields of study. Maturana's, Von Foerster's, Bateson's, and Gregory's (1964) (1978) (stylistic, lexical) ideas largely originate outside systemic therapy. By interacting with them, I ontogenetically drifted into different belief systems, and could therefore see therapy differently than I had seen it as a therapist.

Bateson's anthropological approach

The question which was asked in this investigation is closer to the sort of question that Bateson would ask when approaching an anthropological study. This operation involves an attitude and a method for noticing patterns which have not been described before. Bateson said he was looking for "an answer or a bit of an answer to the whole puzzling business of pattern and regularity in nature" (Bateson, 1972; p.74). His experience with these investigations convinced him that, "The advances in scientific thought come from a *combination of loose and strict thinking*, and this combination is the most precious tool of science" (1972; p.75).

This mode of investigation led to Bateson's description of his "... methodological theme - that a vague "hunch" derived from some other science leads into the precise formulations of that other science in terms of which it is possible to think more fruitfully about our own material" (1972; p.79). In other words, my intention is not to catalogue techniques that have been well described elsewhere (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981; Sherman & Fredman, 1986), but to create patterns in observer-therapists' descriptions of therapeutic process which comprehend their descriptions of technique, but are not restricted to technique. The project was from the start deliberately amorphously designed, in order that the process of "loose and strict" could occur. At the same time, my intention was to explore how various theories from other disciplines could be helpful in describing therapeutic process.

Radical constructivism

In conducting this investigation, I have started with Von Glasersfeld's general description of radical constructivism:

> .. [radical constructivism] suggests that we have no one but ourselves to thank for the world in which we appear to be living. ... We build this world for the most part unawares, simply because we do not know how we do it. This ignorance is quite unnecessary. Radical constructivism maintains ... that the operations by means of which we assemble our experiential world can be explored, and that an awareness of this operating ... can help us do it differently and, perhaps, better" (Von Glasersfeld, 1984; p.18).

In short, Von Glasersfeld's argument is that we construct our reality through experiences that fit, rather than match the external world. He gives the example of how a crook can use a differently shaped key than our own and yet still open the door. In other words, there can be multiple versions of fit, and we can never have the information to ascertain a match. The fit that we construct is created through the operational constraints imposed by our regular operations of construction.

Knowledge is not a result of passive receiving "but originates as the product of an active subject's activity" (p.31). This statement is of course nearly equivalent to Piaget's statement that, "Knowledge , therefore, proceeds from action, and all action that is repeated or generalized through application to new objects engenders by this very fact a "scheme," that is, a kind of practical concept" (Piaget, 1980, p.24). From Von Glasersfeld's position, the operational constraints of the observer are those operations which establish regularity. In other words, experience exists through relations of comparison, and as a product of intention. Either something is similar, or it is different from what we have experienced before, and the creation of either relation depends on our wanting or needing the distinction to be made. These comparisons, through which regularity is constructed, can also be called the operations of equivalence and identity, the former yields similar experience, and the latter yields new experience. These operations are very similar to those described by Piaget as assimilation and accommodation. –

We construct order as a consequence of the goals or intentions that we bring into experience: "...an assimilating consciousness can construct regularities and order even in a chaotic world. The extent to which this will

succeed depends far more on the goals and already constructed starting points than on what might be given in a so-called 'reality'" (p.37). Von Glasersfeld gives the example of how the bricklayer, who builds exclusively with bricks, must inevitably come to the conclusion that wherever there is to be an opening for a door or window, he has to make an arch to support the wall above:

> If this bricklayer then believes he has discovered a law of an absolute world, he makes much the same mistake as Kant when he came to believe that all geometry had to be Euclidean. Whatever we choose as building blocks, be it bricks or Euclid's elements, determines limiting constraints. We experience these constraints from the 'inside', as it were, from the brick or the Euclidean perspective. We never get to see the constraints of the world, with which our enterprises collide. What we experience, cognize, and come to know is necessarily built up of our own building blocks and can be explained in no other way than in terms of our ways and means of building (p.37)

As Von Glasersfeld has indicated with this example of the bricklayer, certain components of description have to be selected; and the results of a description will be in terms of these components. The choice of components defines the qualities of the elements, and the range of possible relations between these elements. The act of making the choice also limits the perspective of the person making the choice. The nature of the limitations of this perspective can not be described by the person making the choice, because the person's description of the choice must be made in terms of the components that have been chosen for description. Description is inherently relative to the describer. In the case of this research, I have chosen to describe lexical and textual components, and the relations between these. These components will permit a certain structure, given the limitations of how they are used.

From the constructivist perspective, any representation of the world, is a representation created by the observer. This is inescapable. Keeney (1983; p.79) presents an example of this idea that Bateson used:

> Somebody was saying to Picasso that he ought to make pictures of things the way they are - objective pictures. He mumbled he wasn't quite sure what that would be. The person who was bullying him produced a photograph of his wife from his wallet and said, "There, you see, that is a picture of how she really is." Picasso looked at it and said, "She is rather small, isn't she? And flat?"

The story of the bricklayer and Picasso lead me to make the suggestion that in this investigation I have brought certain intentions, and I have created certain components of description. The bricklayer brought bricks and the intention to build a certain structure; Picasso brought paints, canvas, and the intention to paint - in a certain way. I would like to be careful to specify the both the components and intentions of this investigation.

The specific components will be elaborated subsequently. At this point I would like to specify the question "How do observer-therapists construct therapeutic process?" This basic question needs to be distinguished from the question; "What theories or techniques do systemically oriented observers of systemic therapy say are being used in therapy sessions?" The latter question would be a starting point for cataloguing the techniques that observers describe in their descriptions of therapy.

Cybernetics, general systems theory, and autopoiesis

Bateson and his colleagues in the Macy Foundation Conferences, and his co-researchers, introduced a way of thinking which reincorporated final causality and efficient causality into circularly causal descriptions of behavior. "Final causality occurs when the effect *precedes* the cause. Cyberneticists who study goal-directed behavior favor final causality" (Segal, 1986, p.52). Von Foerster comments: "Whenever you use the word 'because,' you are speaking the language of efficient causality. Whenever you use the words 'in order to,' you are speaking the language of final causality" (in Segal, 1986, p.53). This made it possible to conceptualize different patterns of dynamically interconnected behaviors at various levels. "Cybernetics offers a model of dynamic stability. Stabilities observed at one level result from systemic changes occurring at other levels. For example, the tightrope walker must constantly shift his weight (first order change) to stay on the rope (second order stability)...:Dynamic stability depends on circular causality" (Segal, p.54). This at least obviated linearly causal explanations, and it seemed more consistent with our experience of the complex inter-relatedness of human behavior. Cybernetic theory could be described as the first generation of systems thinking, and it represented the most crucial stage in the history of systems therapy. But there have been important criticisms of cybernetics. Bertalanffy criticized it for being based on a mechanistic metaphor:

> American psychology in the first half of the 20th century was dominated by the concept of the reactive organism or, more dramatically by the model of man as a robot. This concept was common to all major schools of American psychology, classical and neo-behaviorism, learning and motivation theories, psychoanalysis, cybernetics, the concept of the brain as a computer and so forth (Bertalanffy, 1968; p.205).

Bertalanffy suggested that his own theory was "...nonmechanistic in the sense that regulative behavior is not determined by structural or 'machine' conditions but by the interplay of forces" (p.67). The debate continues. Keeney, who along with Maturana, and Von Foerster, could be thought of as representing the third generation of systems thinkers (autonomous self-generating systems, cybernetics of cybernetics, aesthetics), criticized Bertalanffy:

> He gives away his epistemology by choosing to use metaphors of force rather than pattern. Such vitalistic description, when applied to the complexities of living and mental process, actually represents the vulgar, rather than aesthetic view (1983; p.62).

Keeney (1983), Dell (1985), Segal (1986), and others, argue that autopoiesis and constructivism, in combination with many aspects of cybernetics, provide a sound basis for describing both the individual, and the interactions of individuals with each other, because they conceptualize individuals as closed systems. Prior to these theories, both cybernetics and general systems theory were open systems theories. and thus could not coherently explain the autonomous behavior of the individual. Some of the ideas that originated in first order cybernetic theory (ie., homeostasis, negative feedback) have fallen from favour among systems therapists because they are suitable only for stable mechanistic systems.

Logical types, and change theory

There is an aspect of Bateson's discussions of how behavior can be punctuated in hierarchical levels of form and process, which is relevant to this study. This has to do with his explication of patterns of problem behavior, and how change can be initiated. Essentially, he applied Russell's and Whitehead's Theory of Logical Types (1910-1913) to the punctuation of processes so that he could punctuate hierarchies of behavior patterns. Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) give as an example of Bateson's

application of Logical Type Theory to behavior, the puzzle in which nine dots are drawn equidistantly from each other in a 3 x 3 square. One is required to join the dots with four straight lines. The solution requires one to extend two lines past the square. This is called a "second order change" (p.25), because it requires one to think outside a class of behaviors (the normal one) and generate a different class of behaviors. The theory of second order change, which generated from Logical Type Theory has had a profound impact on therapeutic diagnostics and problem-solving. In this investigation, some parallel concepts of change, derived from Maturana's theory are presented.

Binocular vision

Bateson mentioned the term "binocular vision" (1979; p.133) in reference to the two views that two people have in a relationship. He suggested that the double-view is the relationship. Keeney (1983) expanded on this idea when he said, "... a description of social interaction could be derived by considering the views of each interactant simultaneously. In this way, a higher order pattern was constructed" (p.153). In this investigation, the term "binocular vision" is used in a slightly different sense than in the notion of the two views provided by two members of a relationship. The sense in which it was used in this investigation is suggested by Keeney when he said; "Binocular vision, double vision ... provide evidence for a basic discovery by Weber and Fechner that what we perceive is 'difference.' The idea that differences are the 'food for perception' is implicit in cybernetic epistemology" (p.153).

I have combined the meaning that Keeney has described with the notions of equivalence and identity that Von Glasersfeld described as essential to our distinction of components of experience. If we consider these ideas in combination, it is possible to think of the individual as using binocular vision. Von Glasersfeld suggests that we distinguish through operations of comparison. The basic forms of comparison are difference and similarity. Difference yields identity, and similarity yields equivalence. The point is that an individual distinguishes by comparing some aspect of experience with previous experience. I am calling this process of comparison binocular vision. I believe it is still consistent with Bateson's original conception, because the result is still perceived as difference - the elemental unit of perception. I will discuss this further in Chapter IV.

(Objectivity) and "immanent mind"

Bateson's punctuation of a hierarchy of processes and forms of behaviors was a major advance for systems therapy. However, it has been criticized for being predicated on the concept of 'immanent mind', mental determinism, and for having retained vestiges of Newtonian mechanics in his concept of information (Dell, 1985; p.7). Bateson was fond of his conceptual roots in mysticism. His concepts constantly point to a meta-meta-domain of an ineffable substantial pattern that connects all things (Creatura, Mind). Dell suggests that by considering Maturana's and Bateson's concepts in tandem, these problems can be corrected. Maturana posits only "That substratum is a void in the sense that there are no things. And there cannot be things, because things pertain to language. We can make an ontological claim that that substratum allows for the phenomena to take place, but we cannot characterize that substratum" (1983; s.3, p.12). One might say that Bateson had an affinity with the Gnostic traditions, while Maturana expresses more affinity with some Buddhist traditions.

These points are of more than passing importance. Maturana takes us entirely into the world of relations and interactions. The last vestiges of objectivism in Bateson's concepts are gone. Anything that exists, exists in language, which is itself defined as "the consensual interactions of consensual interactions". Everything said is said by an observer. Living unities are defined as organizations in which the components "are viewed only in relation to their participation in the constitution of the unity (whole) that they integrate. For this reason nothing is said about the properties that the components of a particular unity may have, other than those required by the realization of the organization of the unity" (Maturana, 1981; p.24).

When someone asked Maturana; "If indeed you bring things forth by the operation of distinction, how come you cannot walk through the wall?"; Maturana replied; "Just because walls are distinguished as those things through which you cannot go through. ... Ideologies are like walls. There are ideologies that you just cannot go through. ... we exist in a domain in a manner I have explained under structural coupling which we describe in the manner I have described and we have no other manner of describing" (1983; s.3, p.12).

In Maturana's world, verification of objects is impossible, although it is quite possible to speak of objects. As a result, Maturana puts objectivity in parentheses. The observer always participates in bringing forth reality through the distinctions that the observer generates. Instructive interaction, where A determines the response of B is impossible. A's behavior can select, or trigger a response in B, but B's structure determines the response. Unities are structure determined, and causality as a phenomenon does not exist. Structure-determined systems are necessarily perfect, they always behave according to their structure. "Whenever we claim that an organism has made a mistake we are using the unachieved goal as our point of reference: we are *not* using the organism's structure as our referent. ... A structure-determined system functions solely according to its structure - not according to purposes ... [purposes or other ascriptions of meaningful behavior] exist *only* in the domain of the descriptions of an observer" (Dell, 1985; p.11).

As a consequence of the self-referentiality of autonomous systems, Maturana suggests that we inhabit multiverses. Each of us exists within our own structure determined worlds. This implies that we are responsible for the worlds we create. We are responsible in the sense that as organisms we bring forth the realities we inhabit. This idea of responsibility simply indicates that no one else can generate our individual multiverses. The word, responsibility, does not imply control, or conscious choice, although these words may indicate possibilities. At the same time as we are responsible, we are also structurally determined. We exist as a consequence of our ontogenetic histories. Nothing we do is arbitrary, even though we are usually not aware of how our structurally determined feelings, behaviours or thoughts originated. Maturana seems to like to imply that we have choice in our behaviour, but these statements usually apply to his descriptions of his choice to exist passively in the Chilean political climate. Conversely, Maturana's concept of how we co-drift in structural coupling with the mediums we inhabit, indicates how we perceive our ontogenies to develop in mysterious and uncontrollable ways.

Change

The primary idea related to the topic of change in psychotherapy which needs to be distinguished here is that while most of the systemic schools of therapy rely on the idea of the therapist as an active agent or instrument of

change, from the perspective of the second order cybernetic position a therapist can not be considered as an agent of change because each person (client) is considered as a system that is closed to information. This means that a therapist can not be said to directly influence the behaviour of another person. A therapist enters into a medium in which he or she co-exists with a client. If there is sufficient coherence so that they continue to interact, then they will inevitably change through mutual processes of adjustment to each other other. The therapist is not considered as a direct instrument of change, nor can the therapist be said to cause change to happen in an intended direction. In the concept of self-generating systems, future-directed behaviours are not intrinsically necessary. Maturana dispenses with teleonomic explanations altogether: "The notions of purpose and function *have no explanatory value* in the phenomenological domain which they pretend to illuminate, because they do not refer to processes indeed operating in the generation of any of its phenomena" (1970, p.86). Von Foerster suggests that if we want to talk about directing change in therapy, at best we can talk about helping clients to shift away from undesired behaviours.(personal communication, 1987).

One possible advantage of considering persons as closed systems is that this permits us to conceive a finite range of possible behaviours, even though this be an extraordinarily wide range. Von Foerster has demonstrated that the range of possible outputs of even a very simple non-trivial machine is astronomic. As a result, the theoretical idea of finite behavioural possibilities in closed systems is not a real advantage. In practice, we observe that people use certain words over and over, and that they repeat certain patterns of behaviours. Out of the whole finite range of possible behaviours we develop stable patterns of behaviour. These stable patterns are similar to what Von Foerster calls eigen values. In practice, everyone exhibits a limited range of language and behaviour, even though the possibilities are virtually limitless. Second order cybernetics involves the study of the emergence of stable behaviours in observing systems. The aspect of second-order cybernetics which involves generating patterns in behaviour is very similar to some basic theories of systemic therapy. However, second-order cybernetics does not assume that patterns of behaviour imply goal directedness; nor does it assume that therapists can predictably redirect patterns of behaviour. One might perform activities with clients which precede changes, but one can not say that

our behaviours necessarily influence clients in any particular way, unless we are simply describing our own descriptions of how we make sense of how our interventions work.

The concept of autonomous closed structurally determined systems necessitates and facilitates a re-examination of how we conceive change, and our roles as therapists in the change process. The question of how we, as autopoietic multiverses can influence each other is a very difficult one to answer without reverting to notions of change agency. Maturana has suggested several explanatory devices which should prove useful, for developing both explanations and praxis. For instance, the concept of structural coupling, which has only been alluded to in the course of this discussion has much potential. Similarly, Maturana has suggested the concepts of threshold, structural change, organizational change, ontogenic co-drift, and perhaps most significantly, he has placed the role of language at center stage.

Von Foerster has also suggested many potentially powerful explanations. From my point of view, his two cryptic imperatives suggest a world of possibilities. The aesthetic imperative is, "If you want to see, then learn to act"; and his ethical imperative is, "Act always to increase the choices". The first is perhaps a variation of Piaget's idea that knowledge proceeds from action, but he has altered it slightly so that one might notice how manifold levels of change may proceed from adjustments of behaviour. I would suggest the implication of this imperative is that it calls for the generation of innovative methods for interacting with people in ways which allow them to shift their actions.

Rather than discussing the various explanations for change which these theories suggest, I will leave the reader at this point with a sense of some possibilities. These possibilities will be elaborated in the course of the presentation of the results and in the discussion.

G Concepts related to the method of the investigation

Autopoietic and constructivist theories are delightful to pursue because they require us to shift from the objectivist and causal implications of our natural language. Moreover, they are tremendously attractive to systemic therapists because they provide explanations for considering people as unique beings who inhabit unique worlds. In Maturana's words "It is very difficult to

claim that the other fellow is mistaken." Another consequence is that the observer acquires full responsibility, if not control, for the world that he or she distinguishes. This consequence places the researcher at the center of the product of research. This implies that the results both reveal and are relative to the researcher.

Reduction in explanation

The consequences of these perspectives have yet to be recognized. The question of how to conduct research, and how to present it are being developed. In the context of this investigation, it is important to recall that Maturana argues that scientific explanations can be made, but that they exist in the domain of descriptions of phenomena. In other words, Bateson's and Keeney's notions of hierarchies of punctuation exist in the domain of scientific explanation. Although unities and structural correspondencies between unities and the mediums in which they exist cannot be reduced to the properties of components, they can be explained through reductions. These reductions are the distinctions of the observer.

The last point is an important one in the context of this investigation. The description of lexical items, is a reduction which deprives the description of the meaning which is inherent in words in context. Nevertheless, all descriptions are reductions, in that they are not the events themselves. Therefore, it is entirely possible for me, or any observer, to distinguish and describe components of interactions. It is also clear that the distinction, and its consequences, are the responsibility of the observer, and that the distinctions which are made are built out of the distinctions and components generated by the observer.

Comments on the lexical analysis

In this investigation, the observer's patterns of lexical items were analyzed. Maturana is quite specific about lexical and semantic components; "If one considers linguistic interactions as orienting interactions it is apparent that it is not possible to separate, functionally, semantics and syntax, however separable they may seem in their description by the observer" (1979; p. 33). he is suggesting that even though it is possible to remove words from their contexts, and describe them semantically, it is not possible to know the

orientation that words produce, as a change of state, in the internal interactions in the listener's cognitive domain. Secondly, "an entire series of communicative *descriptions* can itself be a communicative *description* ; the whole sequence once completed may orient the listener from the perspective of the perspective of the state to which the sequence itself has led him" (p.34).

In other words, lexical analysis, of the kind conducted in this investigation, has severe limitations. I recognize these limitations in practice through being very cautious about my interpretations of lexical patterns. I do not propose that word frequency counts, and the creation of collocational sets provides very useful information about how observers construct therapeutic process. However, I would suggest that by recognizing the limitations of this method for investigation, it is possible to use the method to obtain a different perspective on familiar words. Perhaps a slight shift in perspective will enable others to find new perspectives of their own.

The rational for conducting the lexical analysis grew out of a constellation of factors. For one, I wanted a method for describing the observers' statements in a way that permitted comparison between observers, and in a way which would permit readers to make their own interpretations. Secondly, I studied with a professor of English Literature who specialized in stylistic analysis. Michael Gregory co-authored with John Spencer, a monograph on stylistics in 1964. I adopted his text as a guide for this lexical analysis. Thirdly, and this information has only become available to me since this dissertation was completed, Heinz Von Foerster's students conducted a lexical analysis of the contributions to the book which they prepared in 1974, entitled, *Cybernetics of cybernetics*. They were also in pursuit of determining the points of lexical convergence among the authors who contributed to their text. Their analysis turned to a mathematical computation of entropy, and I recommend that the interested reader examine the glossary to this book. It was reprinted in 1986.

The method for the analysis of the lexical contents of the observer-therapists comments follows a from that is consistent with the stylistic analysis of lexical elements in literature. The words which have been investigated indicate certain broad patterns. Please keep in mind that lexical analyses are a very narrow form of analysis, and therefore one must recall the limitations which accompany such a study. The greatest of these is that the words have been decontextualized. Therefore they can have a great variety of functions in

the text itself. A word which is used in the negative form, i.e., 'this is not that' is in a sense used to mean the opposite of what the word means in the positive. Words also acquire meanings according to the company they are found in. I hope that the textual analysis which is part of this study will balance some of limitations of the purely lexical analysis.

The lexis[1] observers use demonstrates one level of observers' constructions. A lexical analysis permits one to look at the words themselves, however briefly, or subjectively. This method should not be used exclusively, but as an adjunct. As an adjunct, it provides a useful perspective, because it is a different perspective. Typically we use words without noticing the patterns of words we are using. If we look at those patterns, then we have, in effect, added a dimension to our observations of how we bring forth reality in language.

The method of lexical analysis is not unfamiliar in psychotherapeutic research. Much of the research on Milton Erickson's work has been conducted through micro-analyses of transcribed hypnotherapy (Bandler & Grinder, 1975, 1976; Erickson, Rossi & Rossi, 1976). I have mentioned earlier that Stiles (1986), and Gottschalk (1986) have developed substantial schools of verbal and lexical analysis, which unfortunately are directed and constructed in ways that are not relevant for this investigation. As a technique, lexical analysis is perhaps most familiar to psycholinguists conducting stylistic analyses of literary texts. In stylistic analyses, lexical investigations are typically subordinated to more comprehensive studies of intra-textual and extra-textual variables involved in the organization of literature (Gregory and Spencer, 1964; Taylor, 1981). Because words out of context have limited potential for revealing how texts are constructed, lexical analyses are seldom conducted in isolation.

On the other hand, since this exploration is designed to discuss how therapists construct process in therapy, one aspect which can be discussed is the building blocks. The observers' comments are built out of words, and there are patterns in the words that are used. These patterns can be explored in the words themselves without considering the context in which they exist. At another level, it will be possible to use the words as a basis for exploring some

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[1] For the sake of simplicity of expression, the term, lexis, will be used as a noun in this investigation to indicate what might more commonly be referred to as lexical elements, or words. Lexis, in this case is synonymous with, words, but the word, lexis, is used in this case to refer specifically to the aspect of stylistic analysis which pertains to the analysis of words and patterns of words.

of the contextual patterns of similarities.

Despite the limitations of lexical analysis, it is a useful method. This method is consistent with Maturana's emphasis on language in autopoiesis. It is also consistent with the importance that family systems oriented therapists who have been influenced by NLP, the Milan Group, Erickson, or the MRI Brief Therapy Project team, place on language. A potentially relevant avenue of exploration, which has not been developed in this investigation would involve investigating how this study is contextualized in the larger framework of the sociogenesis of language (Bain, 1983).

I am not an expert on literary stylistics, so the methods I have using may be crude by current standards for computerized mainframe concordance programs (i.e., Oxford Concordance Program). With the aid of a personal computer, I have been able to do extensive word counts, and this has enabled a very clear picture of the words that the observers used as a group, individually, and in descriptions of each segment.

A few comments about Gregory's descriptions of lexical analysis will provide the necessary background for understanding the approach taken in this investigation. The following passage is taken from *Linguistics and Style*, (Gregory and Spencer,1964). I will quote an extensive statement here because the reader is unlikely to be familiar with the terms:

> Theoretical categories are required for the formal description of lexis, and two fundamental ones, *collocation* and *set* have been proposed. Collocation is set up to account for the tendency of certain items in a language to occur close to each other, a tendency not completely explained by grammar. For example, the item 'economy' is likely to occur in the same linguistic environment as items such as 'affairs', 'policy', 'plan', programme', 'disaster' - most of us could compile quite a long list. These items are termed the collocates of 'economy' which, because it is the item under examination is itself termed the *nodal item*. A list of collocates of the nodal item constitute its collocational range, In formal lexical study, of course, the establishment of the collocational range of an item would be the result of a statistical investigation covering a wide rage of texts. If 'finance' were taken as the nodal item, and a collocational range established for it, it would probably emerge that there was a considerable overlap with the range of 'economy', that these two items share a significant number of collocates. So too, perhaps, if one took 'industry' as a nodal item. These three items could then be grouped together into a *set*, the second theoretical category of lexis,

> which accounts for the tendency of items to share part of their collocational range, to have a collocational overlap....
>
> It will be clear that what constitutes a set in any description depends upon both the nature and the amount of data being examined, and upon the delicacy of the description; that is, its degree of detail and specificity.... The more mutual collocation range demanded as the criterion for a set, the smaller the sets and the more delicate the description.....
>
> It may be asked what are the advantages of this formal handling of lexis. Items such as 'economy', 'finance', and 'industry' could, after all, be grouped together on purely semantic grounds. However, when compared to the referential criterion of meaning, the formal criterion of collocation has this in its favour: it is more observational and objective. Its disadvantage for the analyst of style is that it demands large-scale frequency counts, ... the theory of lexis is already valuable in that it throws light on certain aspects of 'chain' (one thing *after* another) and 'choice' (one thing *rather* than another) relationships in language not revealed either by grammar or traditional lexicography. (pp.73-74)

In the case of the study at hand, the frequency count that has been done goes some way towards establishing the collocational range of the words that have been used. Those words which are commonly used indicate a consensus. If one considers words as building blocks, then one can notice where these observers are using similar material.

In the terms presented by Gregory and Spencer, the word frequency count that I have done establishes the collocations utilized by this particular population (five particular observer-therapists). These lists illustrate the company that these words keep. Although it is true that all these words are part of the common language used by the general population of English speaking people, in another sense, it is also true that these words compose a specialized world, the world of these observer-therapists. We have before us then, both a microcosm of the world at large, and a macrocosm of a specialized world. We will need to examine some elements of each in order to make sense of how the specialized world is organized. Each of the words used relates to a common language, and so has meaning in relation to that language. Each of these words also has meaning in relation to the pattern of words presented by these observers. The entire question of semantics in lexical analysis involves much judgement and caution.

Comments on the verbal content analysis

As I have indicated earlier, my review of the literature did not find any previous reports of the application of lexical analysis to the investigation of how observers construct therapeutic process. However, there have been studies which investigated verbal behavior as such. It is notable that the modes of verbal analysis have directly reflected the theoretical perspectives of the investigators. Because of this, those previous investigations which seem to have utilized some methods which were similar to those used in this investigation, on closer inspection can be seen to have used very different methods.

There are two active traditions of verbal analysis. Stiles (1986) publishes frequent accounts of his work with Verbal Response Modes (VRM). He credits the initial concept to research conducted by Goodman (1972). The VRM is a systematized scale for rating therapists' verbal responses according to Rogerian categories. The taxonomy includes the basic categories of, frame of reference (speaker, other), source of experience (speaker, other). These categories compose a grid, on which the various statements of the communicator are rated according to the modes: edification, disclosure, advisement, confirmation, question, acknowledgement, interpretation, reflection. Stiles has developed a manual, and he claims that this system is now being used in many situations outside psychotherapy research. Obviously, the success of the rating system depends on the rater adopting the Rogerian conceptual system. In other words, the application of this system inevitably finds that communicators construct their communications in more or less the same way as Rogers. Stiles' goals, and methods, are distinctly different from those described in this investigation. I have not begun with a clearly defined concept of communication or therapeutic method. I am also more concerned with the processes through which observers organize their descriptions, whereas Stiles is more concerned with inferring objective categories.

The second active group of verbal behavior researchers are led by Gottschalk (1986), and Gleser (1969). These researchers and others who used their methods have published a considerable number of studies on what Gottschalk and Gleser refer to as Verbal Content Analysis, and what other researchers often refer to as the Gottschalk and Gleser method. The method

generates from the psychodynamic tradition of projective analysis. Essentially, they have developed a manual of definitions for describing the psychic states which they say are implied by particular words or groups of words. By using this scale, it is possible to produce statistically based client personality descriptions which are valid in comparison with other instruments used to derive similar descriptions. In fairness, they have elaborated a sophisticated instrument, which serves their purposes, and they are very clear that they are inferring psychic states.

From the perspective that I have taken in this investigation, neither of these traditions of verbal behavior research provide useful history. Von Foerster relays a passage from Herbert Brün (1971) that is applicable here:

> The definition of a problem and the action taken to solve it largely depend on the view which the individuals or groups that discovered the problem have of the system to which it refers. A problem may thus find itself defined as a badly interpreted output, or as a faulty output of a faulty output device, or as a faulty output due to a malfunction in an otherwise faultless system, or as a correct but undesired output from a faultless and thus undesirable system. All definitions but the last suggest corrective action; only the last definition suggests change, and so presents an unsolvable problem to anyone opposed to change.

I am suggesting that these two schools of verbal behavior analysis are essentially based on the notion that language represents a substratum of objectively predetermined psychic processes. Therefore their methods produce more validation of their preconceptions. This is like the "correct but undesired output from a faultless and thus undesirable system".

I am starting from a different assumption, namely; that "language is a tool with which to express thoughts and experiences" (Von Foerster, 1984; p. 195), when I ask, "What can one learn from observers' descriptions about the way that they construct therapeutic process?" This assumption implies that observers' methods for using linguistic tools are their constructions. There is no substratum beyond the linguistic representations that are available. In other words, from the constructivist position, I am not preconceiving that language represents psychic structure, I am saying that language is psychic structure. This implies that investigation is a process of creating structures in the language that is used. One could think of this as an open-ended approach to investigation.

Miller (1967) conducted an investigation which is exemplary of the sort I am referring to when he presented groups of adults and groups of children with lists of words individually printed on cards; and he asked them to categorize them according to similarity of meaning. He found that adults grouped the words syntactically according to word class (noun, verb, adjective, etc.), while children developed complex relations of imagery, metaphor, and meaning. The point is that Miller was using the lexical analysis method, as were Gottschalk and Gleser; and Stiles; but their applications were based on different epistemologies of language, and therefore the methods were turned to very different ends.

III METHOD

A Introduction

The purpose of this section is to inform the reader of how this research was conducted. The method that was used was the method which evolved through the process of conducting the investigation. Therefore, it is important to explain the evolution of the method. Greenberg (1986) refers to this as the process of the process. I will do this by describing both how the final form is constructed, and the major choices that were made during the creation of this form.

It is important for the reader to develop some understanding of my style of interaction with the questions, and processes which emerged for me during the course of the work. This knowledge creates an important part of the context that is required for for the reader to understand what is presented in this document.

I would like the reader to develop a clear picture of the evolution of this project, and therefore I will describe as clearly as possible, from my perspective, the major aspects of what actually happened. Of course, for the sake of presentation, only those choices and processes which I think are relevant will be included. The purpose of the description of the method is to help the reader develop clarity about the method of the investigation. This is difficult, because the method evolved through oscillations between myself, the text, and the literature. Please assume that there were various stages and decisions which need not be communicated here.

B Overview of the genesis of the method

The community

This research originated in the context of a community of therapists, students, and professors who were affiliated with the Department of Education Psychology at the University of Alberta. Some of the participants in the research had obtained doctorates in Counselling Psychology, and were professionally involved in agencies that were independent from the

university. Supervisory guidance was provided by members of the staff in the Counselling Area, and Student Counselling Services.

I have been a student in the counselling program at the University of Alberta since 1980. I completed a master's degree in counselling psychology in 1983, and I have been enrolled in the doctoral program since then. I completed the coursework and a year's internship by 1984, and since then I have been professionally involved in a variety of settings as a therapist, instructor and supervisor. Work on this project evolved through several attempts at different thesis topics, and I have been pursuing this particular question for about a hear and a half.

The people in the Counselling Area, and Student Counselling Services at the University of Alberta have provided the context and the stimulation for this work. The members of the community in which I was involved were actively pursuing many research questions, particularly in the area of systemic therapy. I am especially indebted to the leadership provided by Dr. Allen VanderWell, and Dr. Don Sawatzky, as are many students and professional therapists now practicing in the Edmonton area, and elsewhere.

Background

This particular community of therapists has been especially influenced by some of the major schools of family therapy and naturalistic hypnosis. Both Dr. VanderWell and Dr. Sawatzky have worked extensively at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Much of the training that I was involved in at the University of Alberta took place in a team setting with either a one-way mirror or video-taped observation. I have subsequently continued to work as a family therapist and family therapy supervisor, often in settings where teams were used in the supervision process.

This research is thoroughly embedded in the community in which it originated. I must give particular credit to Dr. VanderWell for creating a fertile environment. Although the community is not tightly knit in a physical space, it is a community in which therapists frequently meet, discuss, and participate in live peer team supervision. The members have individually participated in a variety of other specialized training settings. Many of us have trained with students of Milton Erickson and a variety of family therapists.

Theoretical orientations

Over the last three or four years, some of us have been directing our attention towards developing a theoretical model that would comprehend the variety of therapeutic practices that we were engaged in. We found that the writings from the Mental Research Institute and Milton Erickson were useful in a practical way, but did not adequately explain the complexity of the individual therapist working with different clients. Our attention has been directed first towards the work done by Gregory Bateson, and subsequently to that of Humberto Maturana, and Heinz Von Foerster. We are fortunate here to be close to the Family Therapy Program directed by Dr. Karl Tomm at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary. Dr. Tomm has sponsored public seminars with both Dr. Maturana and Dr. Von Foerster, occasionally in conjunction with Dr. Cecchin and Dr. Boscolo. We have also worked directly with Dr. Maturana and Dr. Von Foerster at the University of Alberta.

As a result of this mutual activity, considerable interest has been generated in our community about how constructivist, autopoietic, and cybernetic ideas can be creatively applied to the explanation and evolution of therapeutic practice. Some research has been conducted, and will be published soon.

Background to the question

I will not take the time here to describe all the various stages of the process that led to the particular question that is the focus of this investigation, but I will make a few comments. At the time when this research question began to take form, I was most interested in describing some of the generic characteristics of significant changes that people experience in the normal course of living. I thought this might provide some ideas about the natural change process which could be used to inform therapeutic procedures.

Following some reflection, I decided that question was too large and formidable. In particular, it seemed that the question really involved two parts, each of which required a response about the other part before it could be answered. One question was (in short), What is natural change?; and the other was, What sort of change should be investigated? In other words, in order to investigate change, I needed to decide what sorts of change to look at, but in order to decide what sorts of change to look at, I needed know something about what natural change is.

Eventually I narrowed the question so considerably that it does not bear much resemblance to either of these two questions. However, there was an important consideration which emerged from trying to decide how to answer those questions. This point was essentially that in order to investigate change, I would first have to make some decisions about what it is. Otherwise, I would not know what to look at. In other words, change would become what I decided it would be - and this would have to occur before the research proper could even begin. So in one sense, the most important question would have to be answered before beginning.

It was this realization which led to me suspect that something similar happens in therapy. Now I am not suggesting that therapists come to therapy with totally arbitrary decisions about change, and that change is always just what they have decided. Instead, my basic assumption is that therapists already have notions of change built into the structures of their beings, as persons, and especially as therapists.

So it seemed to me that it would be reasonable to investigate how therapists construct the change process. My reasoning was that in some crucial respects, change would be exactly what they thought it was. With this assumption in hand, the question evolved further into a question about how those thoughts are organized; what are the components, how are they bound together, what processes of construction are used, and so on. As this sort of focus became apparent, I realized that the question about how therapists construct change would have to be altered slightly. The word 'change' itself implies so many different aspects to therapists, that I could not ask about it without specifying what I wanted them to talk about. Therefore, I decided to consider the more general question; how do therapists construct therapeutic process? Later, when I decided to use video-tapes of therapy and have therapist-observers talk about them, I asked the therapists to select a portion of video-tape which revealed a 'significant' process, or perhaps a shift in the client's behaviour. This, finally, was as near as I came to specifying 'change'.

The particular method which I finally used, was designed to find out about how practicing systemically oriented therapists construct therapeutic processes. I recognized that, finally, the form the research would take when presented would be my construction. However, I wanted to make some sense out of the modes of construction that actual therapists actually used. This

perspective could be distinguished from an investigation of theoretical discussions of change; or an analysis of famous therapists' thoughts about change. It seemed to me that the average person who seeks counselling usually goes to an average therapist. I wanted to find out what normally happens for normal clients and normal systemic therapists.

Consensus

The specific form of the research evolved out of some theoretical, and some practical considerations which I will review briefly here. One theoretical consideration which guided the specific form of the research was the idea of consensus. I am referring here to the way that Maturana and Von Foerster use the word, (or words like it) to talk about the process which leads to the general utility of words. Maturana has said that, "Language takes place in the social domain, it does not take place in the brain." Von Foerster talks about how the outside world emerges from people chosing to agree about the products of their experience:

> If I acknowledge the similarity, the identity between myself and the other, and I choose to evoke the relativity principle, I postulate the existence of the outside world. ... the world is postulated as a consequence of my experience ... the crucial point to be recognized here is that I am free to choose to either adopt or reject the relativity principle ... If I adopt it ... there must be a third, a central reference. It is the relation between thou and I, and this relation is identity: Reality = Community (1986, p.147).

Language is the essential medium of our shared reality. The world exists through our agreement to talk about it a consensual language. The constructivist concept of the ontogenesis of language involves both individual schemas and social interaction. Maturana explains social interaction through the concept of structural coupling. Keeney (1985) has elaborated on Von Foerster's notions of community through a discussion of semantics and politics. These concepts will be discussed further in the fourth and fifth chapters.

As a result of considerations such as these, I decided that I wanted to investigate how a community of therapists construct therapeutic process. My thought was that this would provide a good understanding of what therapeutic process is for the therapists in the community of which I am a member.

Of course the critical variable that I have not discussed is myself. Part of my frustration in conducting this research has been running up against the inevitable conclusion that no matter how many people I talk to, no matter how much I attempt to discern their consensus, the product of the investigation is always whatever I create. This means that whatever decisions I make, and there are many that I make without being aware of them, they will be reflected in the process and results of the research.

There is nothing I can do to take myself out of the picture. The reader is in a similar position. Whatever sense the reader derives from reading this will be the reader's construction. Because there is no way out of this, I think the best I can do is give the reader a fair chance of generating some informed notions of what has been done in this investigation. To this end, I will briefly describe some of my basic beliefs about therapeutic process and change, and I will describe the essential operational choices and activities.

C Personal theory of process and change

It is difficult to know what to say that will assist the reader in understanding this project. I have pointed to my interest in strategic methods, particularly those described by Fisch, Weakland, and Segal (1982). Of course, I have been influenced by the other major luminaries in the area of family systems oriented approaches. I have not been much interested in the schools that have derived more directly from psychodynamic, or behavioral theories.

One of the most interesting aspects of systems theory for me has been the approach described by Gilligan and Carter. They illustrate how joining and utilization are fundamental, regardless of strategy. Their approach is also generative. In therapy, it's the creative challenge of utilizing whatever resources the client and situation provide that has kept my attention. In terms of change, I favour a definition that is very flexible about specific content, but quite specific in the sense that I think change can be observed as a noticeable shift in the client's behavior or expression. In terms of process, I prefer a cooperative model that is based on utilizing whatever resources the client has. I suppose I usually work in a problem-solving frame, and I tend to work within a limited number of sessions. I like to work with each client differently, and I am not aware of using certain techniques repeatedly, although I am sure I do.

Other people have described my work in such a variety of ways that I really can not provide any useful summary of their comments.

D Overview of the method

Five therapists, who have been trained in systemic therapy, from the community of professionals with whom I work, were asked to choose a brief (2-5 minute) video-taped example of their work. I asked them to select a portion which they felt indicated a significant shift or important process in the course of their work with a particular client. I copied these examples onto a master tape.

The therapists who had submitted these examples were then asked to review the master tape, session by session, and after each session to explain to me, in their own words, as clearly and unambiguously as possible, what the significant process or processes were in each of the sessions. I followed a semi-standardized interview format in which I asked each of the participants (who will hereafter be called the observers unless I am referring to their functions as therapists, in which case they will be called therapists) to describe the relationship, the process; and I asked them to describe whether they thought there had been a significant shift for the client during the session. My goal during the interviews was to obtain clarity of understanding for myself about what they were saying. Therefore, the particular questions I asked varied from session to session.

The interviews following each session lasted about twelve minutes. The interviews were recorded on audio-tape. In total, about five hours of audio-tape were obtained. These tapes were transcribed, and these transcriptions were labelled, the original transcripts. The transcripts were then edited. The purpose of the editing was to enhance the clarity of the observers' comments. These transcripts were also sub-divided into the categories of, **relationship**, **process**, and **change**. Each observer was then sent a copy of his or her own edited transcript, and original transcript. Each observer was asked to read these, and make any changes or additions that they thought would improve the clarity of what they were expressing. Two observers made minor changes to the edited transcripts, and the rest were returned unchanged.

Once I had authorized versions of the transcripts I began a process of engaging with them to determine what I wanted to say about them, and what form to give my comments. To abbreviate a lengthy process, the result finally

took the form of the information that is presented in the next two chapters. Essentially, I decided to analyze the transcripts lexically and textually. The particular reasons for this decision are difficult to specify. One reason is that words themselves have always been considered to be very important in psychotherapy. Within the area of systemic therapy, Milton Erickson, and those have have written about his work have generated interest in the multi-levelled meanings of words. From a methodological perspective, a lexical analysis provides a means of accessing the linguistic culture inhabited by the speakers. Personally, I like the aspect of lexical analysis which allows the reader to make associations and interpretations I created the textual analysis to balance the acontextual nature of the lexical analysis. The particular punctuation of the lexical analysis was derived from Bateson's and Keeney's orders of epistemological analysis.

I counted the incidence of 440 words across all session descriptions, and I organized the text into categories of behavioral, explanatory, and conceptual statements. The choices of words to be analyzed were made by me. The criteria for choosing these words were varied, but essentially, I attempted to count any word which I thought might indicate an interesting comparison between observers. First, I counted words which obviously related to psychotherapeutic theory or practice, but as I found very little convergence of use of these words, I looked further into words with no obvious professional connotations.

Once the words had been counted and recorded on a spreadsheet, the patterns of words and word frequencies were grouped and regrouped in a variety of ways, in attempts to create interesting or meaningful patterns. The basic method for the lexical analysis was suggested by Gregory (1964). The analyzed textual statements were also sorted in a variety of ways in an attempts to create patterns. The general nature of these patterns were suggested by Bateson (1979), and Keeney (1983). The approach taken in the analysis of the transcripts was similar in some respects to the approach described by Glaser and Straus (1965, 1967, 1972) in their discussions of the constant comparative method, which is a component of the grounded theory of research. The aspect of this research which was quite similar to the method they described, was in the process that I followed to make sense out of the transcripts. Glaser and Straus describe a process in which the researcher develops a descriptive

structure by recursively interacting with both the 'data', and the theoretical literature. This is what they called the constant comparative method.

The difference between the method I developed, and the method they suggest is that I had some theoretical constructs and formative principles in mind when I started the research. They suggest that grounded theory researchers have no hypotheses or theoretical constructs in mind when they begin. In their method, the practice is to derive information from many different sources, and I really only used the therapists, the observers, the video-tapes, the transcripts, myself, my supervisors, and some literature. Perhaps the distinction between the methods they suggest and the general form of the method I followed is a matter of degree and specifics. Certainly their basic method of alternating between data and theory is consistent with the approach taken here. They suggest that categories and concepts evolve interactively. In the case of this investigation, the categories and concepts were continually recreated as information from theory informed the analysis, or as the analysis suggested re-examination of theory.

In short, through engaging with the transcripts, and considering and reconsidering them in many ways, I eventually determined some categories which appeared informative, so I set about analyzing the entire transcripts according to these categories.

Once the transcripts had been analyzed, I organized some theoretical and summary comments about them. These comments were largely derived from my understanding of some of the work of Maturana, Von Foerster, Bateson, and some recent research on psychotherapy process. These summaries, comments, and some further thoughts, have been included in chapter five. Now that I have described the overview of the method, I will present a more detailed account of each of the components.

The participants

The participants included five therapists, who are also chartered psychologists, and who practice in the Edmonton area. Devon and Tim had received doctorates in Counselling Psychology at the University of Alberta. Gisela obtained a doctorate in Educational Psychology. Gary and Neil are currently completing dissertations in Counselling Psychology at the University of Alberta. They have all been practicing as therapists in a variety of

counselling and mental health settings. Between them they have about sixty years of experience. Gary had probably received the most specialized training in marriage and family therapy. Needless to say, they have all participated in numerous independent training programs, both as students and as instructors.

The nucleus of this group, Devon, Tim, and Gisela, participated for several years in a peer-team research project known as the Western Canadian Center for Experimental Psychotherapy. This center was primarily directed towards developing some of the strategies for brief therapy that were developed at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Although the group was officially organized as an anarchy, the senior participant in the group was Dr. Allen VanderWell, who is currently the Director of Student Counselling Services at the University of Alberta, and who is also a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology. Dr. VanderWell has worked closely with Fisch, Weakland, and Segal, in the evolution of the book *Tactics of Change* ; and he was also acknowledged by Segal for his participation in the development of *The Dream of Reality.*

All the participants in this project have also trained in a variety of other models, which are too extensive to describe here.

The participants were all informed that they were being invited to participate in this project because of their expertise in the area of systemic therapy. They were also informed that they would be paid a reasonable professional rate for their participation.

The video-tapes

Because the participants were working in a variety of settings, some of which had video-taping facilities available, and some of which did not, the quality of the video-tapes varied considerably. Tim's tape was a little blurry, Neil's tape showed the client and Neil's foot. Gary and Devon's tape were clear and audible. The sound on Gisela's tape was very difficult to hear, and viewers frequently had to watch it twice or more.

Neil, Devon, and Gisela informed me of the exact portion of tape that they wanted to include. Tim informed me generally, and I made the specific selection. Tim agreed with my selection, but it is possible that he would have selected a different segment. Gary had asked me to edit a composite of segments from different parts of a session, but this would have made the

segment much longer than the others, so I selected one portion that he had wanted to include. He agreed with this selection.

Gary and Devon had used the tapes from which these selections were made, as demonstration tapes on several occasions before this research was begun. Therefore, they were more familiar with their thoughts about their own selections, than the other participants.

The segments which were selected averaged between four and five minutes in length. They were copied onto the master tape with a brief one or two sentence introduction of the therapist's name and the general nature of the client's presenting problem. Further descriptions of the contents of the video-tapes are included in the next chapter.

Viewing the video-tapes

Separate appointments for viewing the master-tape were made with each of the participants. The interviews typically lasted a total of about three hours each. I was present throughout the duration of each interview. The interviews took place in whatever locations the participants preferred.

The participants watched the sessions in the same sequence; which went from Gary's session, to Devon's, to Gisela's, to Tim's, and finally to Neil's. There was one exception to this sequence of observation. In each case, the participant viewed his or her own session first. This choice of sequence was developed accidentally because I happened to interview Gary first, and his session was first on the master-tape. I noticed that Gary was eager to talk about his own session. It seemed to me that by viewing his own session first, it was easier for him to become involved in the process of describing the sessions. Therefore, I decided to have the other observers watch their own sessions first. My own impression was that this engaged them well in the process of describing the sessions.

At the outset of each interview, I informed the participants, that the purpose of this research was to investigate how observer-therapists construct therapeutic process. I said that it was important for them to explain their ideas as clearly and unambiguously as possible, in language that best described what they wanted to say. I told them that I wanted them to describe what they thought was the important process during the session.

I informed the participants that they could review the video-tapes as often as they wanted. I asked them to make some notes during their observations, and I told them that I would talk with them about their notes following each session. The observers frequently reviewed certain portions several times.

Our discussions were recorded on audio-tape. In all cases, the audio-tapes were well recorded. I was not aware of watching the time during my discussions with the observers, so the fact that all the session description interviews lasted about twelve minutes was not an artifact of conscious intent. There were several variations in length, but these were not common.

The discussions

My primary purpose in talking with the participants was to understand what they were saying. Therefore, I frequently asked them to explain what they had just said, or I paraphrased their last statement as a question. When I listened to the tapes later, I frequently noticed that the observers had explained the same description in more or less the same way, several different times. Often, their first descriptions seemed just as clear as later descriptions. I have no doubt that if I had been able to hear what they were saying the first time, most of the interviews would have been substantially shorter. On many occasions, their progressive explanations also took them into different territories, so I do not regret my stubborn attempts to understand what they were saying. In those cases when the observers repeated themselves, it was clear that they were saying what they wanted to say.

My questions were sometimes directed towards the specific behavioral references for the conceptual statements the observers were making. I am certain that if I had not asked for specific behavioral references on many occasions, that the descriptions would have contained substantially fewer of these. I would say that in terms of my participation in the process of the interviews, that I was most aware of having the effect of moving the observers towards providing practical examples. On many occasions, they provided behavioral examples without prompting, and sometimes I asked them for more behavioral references when they had already provided behavioral references. Therefore, the existence of behavioral references is only partially a product of the questions I asked.

I would like to make one other comment about the interviews here. The observers all reported enjoying the process. They basically said that they felt they had been engaged in a useful, and interesting process. For myself, I found that process interesting, but also frustrating. I identified the frustration as connected with two aspects of this process. For one, the observers were all making interesting comments, and I would have liked to talk with them and express my own ideas. Not only were they making interesting comments, but they were all noticing different aspects of the tapes and describing the processes in different ways. I especially wanted to stop and talk with them, not only about my ideas, but about the ways their ideas differed, or were similar to, the ideas that the other observers had expressed. Therefore, I was frustrated because I could not openly discuss my ideas, and my ideas about the inter-relations of comments.

I observed at the time, that the process of sitting down and listening to another therapist talk about therapy is typically a process that engages both conversants. It was a very unusual feeling for me not to be involved. I wondered afterwards if maybe I should have become more involved. However, I think it was good that I did not. The reason for this, I think, is that because when two therapists talk, they often gravitate towards a mutual language and description of the event.

I particularly noticed this with Tim because I had worked closely with him as a co-therapist not long before doing this research. When Tim and I were talking, he would frequently talk as though he knew that I knew what he was talking about, or he would look to me for confirmation, or an opinion about what he was saying. Typically, we would have come to some mutual understanding and description of whatever event we were talking about. In these conversations however, instead of agreeing with Tim, or stating my opinion, I asked him to explain or clarify what he had said. I noticed sometimes that what he would say then, was quite different from what I thought he would have said, or from what I would have said. Therefore, I think this process of simply seeking clarification, and not expressing an opinion allowed me to hear the observers in a very different way than I would have otherwise. I heard differences between them, and subtleties of personal construction that I had not heard before, and had not expected to hear.

The relationship, process, and change categories

Although I had conducted a short pilot investigation before conducting this investigation, I was not initially aware that I would ask the observers to talk about relationship, process, and change. These terms evolved out of our discussions. These seemed to be the areas that I was interested in finding out about, and equally, these seemed to be the areas that the observers wanted to talk about. One could say that these categories were mutually generated. Once I had conducted two or three interviews, I began to have a sense of the categories that we were typically discussing, and I was more aware of specifically asking about certain words.

However, it is true that in some sessions I did not specifically ask about relationship or change. In rereading the transcripts, it seemed that we talked about these aspects, but not always in reference to the specific words, relationship and change. In some cases, I contacted the participants to find out what they would have said in response to certain categories that I had not specifically asked about, and in all cases, their statements virtually duplicated what had already been said. Finally, of course, they all had a chance to read how I had categorized their statements, and they all agreed with my selections.

The process of transcription

I transcribed all the audio-tapes myself, onto a personal computer. This amounted to about 80 single spaced pages of original transcripts. This process, while arduous, was uneventful. The original transcripts were primarily used for the lexical analysis.

The process of editing the transcripts

The process of editing the transcripts was quite enjoyable. It was remarkable to me how coherent and incisive the descriptions became once I had edited out some of the verbal filler. The observers' key words were left. I simply tried to highlight what they were trying to say. This was not a process of summarizing. However, after this editing, the edited transcripts were about 75% of the length of the original transcripts. These edited transcripts were primarily used for the textual analysis.

While creating the edited transcripts, I became particularly aware of the characteristic patterns of words, and organizations of words that the observer-

therapists used. From my perspective as an editor, it seemed possible to say that many vague or repetitive words were not essential to the basic form or content of what was being said. Equally, it became clear that certain words, or forms of expression were essential to the medium and the message. I would say that through the process of editing I became sensitive to the lexical patterns, and to the larger semantic contexts of these lexical patterns. The nature of the lexical elements, and the nature of the semantic contents which became apparent to me, are revealed in the organization and contents of the analysis of lexis and text which are presented in the fourth chapter.

E The evolution of the analytical method

Introduction: When I began this research, the format for describing the transcripts had not been specifically described. I had intended to follow one of the basic tenets of grounded theory research, and hermeneutic research, namely, to allow the process of interpretation to evolve naturally through the process of seeking to investigate the basic research question.

Initially, I had intended to follow a different path than the one which was eventually chosen. The initial plan had been to edit the transcripts and then return them to the observers and have them describe their descriptions. This plan was designed to produce another level of information, and potentially another level of consensus. Basically, I had hoped that the observers would tell me how they constructed therapeutic process.

This plan was derailed at the stage when I had the edited transcripts, and I needed to determine the questions that the observers would respond to once they had read the edited transcripts. As I struggled with the question of what questions to ask them, I realized that I needed to make a choice about what I would ask them to focus on. This was a very similar problem to the one I had experienced when I was initially considering the question of naturalistic change. Once again, it became maddeningly obvious that even though what I wanted to generate was a consensus of observers' descriptions, and a consensus of observers' descriptions of observers' descriptions, inevitably, I would have to give some form to the product. Therefore, I began to look at the transcripts and figure out what I wanted to say about them. The more I became involved in this, the less it seemed necessary to have the observers comment on their own descriptions again.

Eventually, as my analysis of the transcripts took shape, I decided that it was not necessary to obtain any more information - there was already a great deal available. Therefore, I simply proceeded with generating my own analysis, descriptions, and discussion.

There is one other aspect of the initial plan which changed. Initially I had intended to follow a primarily interpretive phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to making sense of the transcripts. As I considered what the observers had said, what became apparent was that in some way, they were all saying basically the same things. If I had been in a room with them, with all of us together talking about the same session, we all might have assumed that we were describing slightly different perspectives of the same event. In other words, a superficial interpretation could easily have been that all the therapists were basically talking about the same event in slightly different ways. However, I wanted to make finer distinctions than this.

One possible approach would have been to follow what has come to be known in this department (Educational Psychology, University of Alberta) as a phenomenological process. As I understand it, this involves summarizing the statements that participants made, and then thematizing those statements, and then finally developing categories of themes. The investigator then discusses the categories and categories of categories in reference to the literature on the subject (Bain, 1986; Edwards-Sawatzky, 1986). In this case, when I experimented with this process, I arrived at the categories of therapeutic technique that are typically discussed in texts about systemic therapy. Perhaps one reason this occurred was that I tended to see descriptions in the way that I have learned to see them as a therapist. This result was unsatisfying. I was finding themes which related to techniques that were already common knowledge to all of us. I had no interest in describing the techniques that therapists see each other using, or use in their descriptions.

The analytical method

I needed a different method for analyzing or interpreting the text; one that would let me see what I had not seen before. This initiative led in various directions. One route I explored, and eventually adopted, in a modified form, was Bateson's and Keeney's tri-level zig-zag punctuation of orders of epistemological analysis. This scheme has been described in the previous

chapter and in the glossary. This scheme was particularly attractive to me as a therapist, because it is similar in many ways to the implicit organization of conversations that teams of therapists follow when they are discussing therapy. In my experience, systemic therapists are typically careful to describe behaviours, interactions, and patterns of interactions. This style of punctuating observations derives largely from the seminal influence that Bateson has had on systemic therapy. This punctuation serves many purposes, not the least of which is a common, or consensual habit of languaging. It also allows therapists to compare how they organize their observations at each of the three levels. Finally, this punctuation enables one to organize observations so that interventions can be designed which are intended to effect changes efficiently throughout many interconnecting "layers" or patterns of interaction.

I transformed the the three layer punctuation of behaviours, interactions and patterns of interaction slightly to align my analysis with the textual nature of the "behaviours" which I was investigating. I was describing patterns of words, instead of patterns of behaviour. Therefore the three layers of textual analysis pertained to descriptions of behaviours, descriptions of explanations of descriptions of behaviour, and descriptions of concepts describing explanations This notion turned out to be operationally complex, but it seemed conceptually valid, and it was possible for me to discriminate these levels in the texts. I also found that there were levels within levels, and at each level this tri-level mode of categorization provided a useful form of punctuation.

In order to punctuate the observers' descriptions according to this tri-level system, it was first necessary to decide that the actual event which I was trying to describe was the observers' interactions with the video-tapes. In this sense, the focus was not the video-tapes, but how the observers interacted with the video-tapes. With this decision made, it was possible to consider the transcripts themselves as a unity (cf. unity in the glossary) with which I was interacting. This unity could itself be considered as a composite unity. Therefore I could interact with the components. This general from of analysis solved two problems. For one, the nature of my interaction with the texts is accounted for because my interaction is revealed through the punctuations and distinctions that I make. Secondly, I could consider various levels, or components of the text as corresponding to the levels of behavior, interaction and choreography.

The lexical analysis

The idea that the transcripts themselves could be considered as a composite unity with which I was interacting led to many possibilities for analysis and interpretation. It seemed to me that the behavioral level, or the level of simple actions, if you will, could be constituted by the actual words used in the transcripts. In other words, the words could be treated as the behaviors, and if I categorized the words, the categories could be treated as the categories of behaviors. Thus, a lexical analysis was born. The approach used here was basically similar to treating the transcripts as literary texts. My function became something like that of the literary critic, or interpreter.

I referred to some of the texts that I used when studying stylistics as an undergraduate honors student of English Literature, and found that according to Gregory and Spencer (1964), the study of lexis is an acceptable aspect of the study of the style of literature. This seemed to me like an appropriate analogy for talking about how observer-therapists construct therapeutic process. Gregory and Spencer suggest that lexical analysis, "demands large-scale frequency counts", so, with the aid of a computer that searched for words, this is what I did.

We will see that the analysis and discussion of words evolved into a pattern of discussion which involved each of the three levels of the orders of recursion on Bateson's and Keeney's ladder. In other words, there is the elemental level of specific words, and then the level of interactions between words - the categories, and then finally the choreography of lexis - namely the concepts which describe the interactions of the categories of words (each level of analysis evolves through recursions of these three levels).

The transcripts of the interviews were recorded in a computer, and organized into twenty-five sections - one section for each observer's description of each segment. Although two versions of the transcripts were available (edited and unedited), I decided to use the unedited versions. If I had used the edited versions, the analysis would have reflected my choice of words. The observers' transcripts were of approximately similar length, so it was reasonable to compare frequencies of word use.

I generated an initial list of words to be counted simply by reviewing the transcripts and noting the words that seemed interesting from my perspective on therapy. As I counted the incidents of these words in each section, it

became clear that those words which I thought would be common were not. Therefore, I returned to the transcripts to find more words that would be common. The more I looked, the fewer words were revealed as being consistently used. Granted, I was not typically counting common prepositions, conjunctions, or passive verbs. The choice of words was a personal selection generated out of my interest in finding words that everyone was using. Eventually, the list became four hundred and forty long, and at this point I arbitrarily decided to stop and see what could be done with what was available.

A few notes on the mechanics of the search procedure are required. When using the computer, I would typically search for root words. For example, a search for the word 'grow' would find 'growing' and 'grown'. A search for 'conscious', would find, 'unconscious' and 'consciously'. In most cases the root word search found identical whole words. The decisions I made in searching for words were consistent with the choices which Wachal (1966) explains must be made when using a computer for word frequency counts. The frequency of incidents of use was recorded for each segment. Consequently, three types of sums were computed. Type one consisted of the sum of word uses by each observer. The second type was the sum of uses of each word in descriptions about each segment. The third sum was the total use of each word by all observers.

The list of words, frequencies of use, and sums were then compiled into several categorized lists. These categories were chosen primarily with the intention of revealing similarities and differences in the use of words. I will present these categorized lists, and then make a few comments about them.

I propose to follow several procedures in order to make some sense out of these words. The first step is to see what patterns can be generated out of the list of words that all therapists commonly use in their descriptions of therapy. This will provide the consensual reference from which one can make comparisons with idiosyncratic variations. These idiosyncratic variations can be described in several formats. One will include the description of the patterns of words used in descriptions of each individual segment. Another will include descriptions of the patterns of words that individual observers use. There will be a set of words for each observer that no other observer uses; a set of words used exclusively in the description of each session; words used more frequently by each individual observer, and so on.

The textual analysis

At the next level up on Bateson's and Keeney's ladder, I was confronted with the question of how to talk about interactions and categories of interaction in the observers' descriptions. I decided that the observers' basic mode of interaction with the video-tapes of the sessions, was through their processes of explaining what they were saying. Therefore, I renamed the interactional category, the explanatory category, and included it as the middle level of what became known as the textual analysis.

The textual level was also broken into three components, each of which mirror the three levels of recursion on the ladder of epistemological analysis. The three levels of textual analysis involve; the observers' references to specific behaviors; the observers' references to the explanations of their descriptions of behavior; and thirdly, the observers' conceptual descriptions.

The choreographic analysis

As I said, the entire lexical analysis operates at the behavioral order of recursion, and the entire textual analysis operates at the interactional order of recursion. The choreographic level of description includes my discussions of the interactions of the textual (or interactional) level of analysis, and the lexical (or behavioral) level of analysis. In other words, the highest level of recursion, namely the level of choreography, is basically constituted of the larger conceptual identities that I generated to describe the interactions of other levels. In the choreographic category, I analyzed individual style, with special reference to metaphor.

IV TRANSCRIPT ANALYSES

A Introduction

The possible approaches to this discussion vary. There is a spiralling interconnection of patterns, but the presentation requires a comprehensible progression. Because the initial purpose was to investigate how therapists construct therapeutic process, I will begin by talking about the individual sessions, and then I will discuss the individual observers.

Within the presentation of the analysis of the sessions, the discussion begins with a description of the lexical patterns across all sessions. This discussion includes a description of the derivation and development of various categories that were used during the analysis of lexical patterns. This will require a discussion of categories of distinction. The observers distinguished certain words in their descriptions, and therefore I will discuss how their distinctions may be categorized. The categories of distinction provide a sub-level of analysis that is conducted concurrently with the stylistic analysis of lexical collocations. Following these remarks, there are some comments on the levels of textual analysis. After this, the reader is provided with my narrative summaries of the observers' descriptions of each session. The next section includes a presentation of the analysis of the descriptions of each individual session. The descriptions of the observations of each session begin lexical analysis, and conclude with textual analysis. The textual analysis in each case incorporates aspects of the lexical analysis. The final section of the presentation of the transcript analysis includes the analysis of the sum of descriptions provided by each individual observer. These are similarly structured first with lexical and then textual analysis.

This entire chapter includes speculative comments on theoretical and methodological considerations. I have included these comments in this chapter because it is easiest to understand these considerations in the context from which they were derived. These speculative remarks form the basis for the discussion presented in chapter five. Because this report is my construction, I will first present a few comments on the nature of my participation.

My participation in this process

It is important to make a few comments here about my participation in the process and presentation of this research. This research has been organized to illustrate the similarities and differences between observers' modes of constructing descriptions of each others' therapy sessions. I deliberately created this method in order to obtain a consensual picture. I wanted this entire presentation to be the observers' presentation. Of course, my desire conflicted with possibility. It was not possible for this presentation to be the observers' presentation. Instead, the outcome is a result of my interaction with the observers' descriptions; and ultimately, the reader completes a triunal interaction.

At this stage of writing, I am aware of how much I have formed the words before you, just as I am aware of having been provoked by the observers' descriptions. I would particularly like to express that the form I have given to the observers' descriptions is my construction, at this time; just as the observers' descriptions were their constructions at that time. This presentation reveals my ontologic condition as it exists in interaction with these observers' statements. I take responsibility for what is said. The presentation you have before you is now my statement; and no longer the observers' statements. I hope the observers and other readers will be sufficiently interested in these statements to arrive at personal understandings, and perhaps generate some responses.

One or two more comments will suffice here. I had intended this project to take a hermeneutic form. As I became more involved with the transcripts, I desired more rigid constraints. I wanted to show patterns at the level of the observers' statements, rather than at various levels of interpretations of those statements. Finally, I constructed a form for the analysis (lexical, textual) complete with categories, sub-categories, and other analytical tools. This form, I now see, has been my creation, and as much a controlling imposition on the text as any amount of overt interpretation.

Although I am aware of having repeatedly changed and adjusted the methods for doing this research, I believe that the outcome is consistent with my original intention of interacting with the observers' comments in such a way that the methods for discussing them would emerge out of the interaction. This has certainly happened. I could not have anticipated the form of this document prior to engaging with the process of creating it.

B Discussion of sessions

I will first discuss some of the larger patterns linking the sessions. This discussion will create a consensual base of language, examples and concepts. Then it will be easier to carry on the discussion of the differences between the individual sessions. Two basic modes of analysis, lexical and textual, have been employed, and theso can be considered separately first and then in conjunction.

Categories for lexical analysis

In order to describe the standard analytical categories that were employed in the lexical analysis, I will present several lists of words, and subsequently describe how they are organized.

The first list is relatively brief. It is composed of all those words that all observers used in at least three out of five descriptions. I have presented the root words, although, as was said, these are also often the whole words actually found.

Words all observers used to describe all sessions

(defined as words used by five out of five observers, with no more than two cells missing per observer, the first number following the word indicates the total frequency of occurrence, and the second number indicates the number of segments in which the word occurred)

think (218/25)	want (109/23)	look (48/18)
say (182/25)	talk (123/19)	feeling (54/17)
not (208/24)	problem (69/19)	client (75/17)
know (151/23)	work (58/19)	

This list is remarkable through being unremarkable. At first glance there is little here that would seem to identify a group of systems theory oriented therapists. Notice that these observers are not commonly using technical or theoretical terms. The use of 'client' identifies a professional relationship, and 'work' and 'problem' identify some characteristics of the relationship. This could be describing a variety of professional relations. The words, 'think', 'say', 'know', 'talk', and 'feeling' specify the mode and substance of the relation, and

perhaps point towards a counselling situation. Certainly, 'talk' and 'feeling' are collocationally overlapped in a set which might have 'counselling' as a focal term. The items which stand outside the professional relation and counselling sets are 'want', 'not', and 'look'.

The second list includes the words used by all observers at least once. These words describe a more tenuous consensus than the previous list, although in some cases these words were used often in many session descriptions.

Words used by all observers at least once

(excluding words in the list above, hyphens before or following the word indicate variable prefixes or suffixes, the first number following the word indicates the frequency, and the second number indicates the frequency of descriptions in which the word occurred)

Differen-	(66/20)	Direct	(32/10)	Little	(62/12)
Change	(63/17)	Happen	(48/15)	Suggest	(26/14)
Problem	(69/18)	Answer	(38/11)	Same	(29/13)
Mean	(41/17)	Continue	(22/12)	Specific	(13/8)
Relat-	(48/16)	Idea	(22/12)	Begin	(41/16)
Clear	(25/12)	Good	(36/16)	Family	(37/11)
Mother	(110/15)	Focus	(32/11)	Notice	(16/10)
Laugh	(29/10)	Voice	(40/14)	Assume	(12/6)
Seem	(35/14)	Boy	(60/9)	Depressed	(33/5)
Positive	(21/10)	Use	(11/10)	Dance	(5/5)
Kid	(59/8)	Experience	(15/7)	Lead	(14/7)
Motivate	(56/6)	Raise	(10/6)	-Conscious-	(12/7)
Right	(48/18)	Sense	(50/19)		

Although one might question the relevance of commenting on a list of common words which in many cases occurred relatively infrequently, this list is important because there are so few words that all observers used. Those words which they do all use clearly have a unique identity, and one that is relevant to the purpose of discussing how therapists describe therapeutic process.

The third list shows a division of the words that all observers used at least once, into the standard categories that I propose to use as part of the lexical analysis. These categories are based on the divisions that became apparent in the words commonly employed by all observers. These categories are discussed below.

Standard Categories

Primary Distinctions: change, happen,

Modes of Distinction: different(ce), begin, same, continue

Aspects of Distinction:

Qualities: positive, direct, good,

Quantities: little

Spatial dimensions: direct

Cognitions: conscious, reason, agree, idea, assume, mean

Sensory Perceptions (vision): focus, notice, seem

Verbal expressions: suggest, raise, answer, voice

Behaviors: laugh, nod

Internal states (emotion): depress, motivate, experience,

Personal Identity: family, mother, boy, kid,

Professional Actions:

Uncharacterized: relate; dance; use;

This structure for categorizing, or punctuating, the lexis was used to operate on the words most commonly used by each of the individual observers (these lists have been retained for reference). It is now possible to make some comparisons between the descriptions provided by individual observers, but first I will offer a few comments on the lists of commonly used words.

Comments on words commonly used by observers

One of the most notable aspects of the words therapists used was that those words which were commonly used were not in themselves distinguishable from the common language of a literate population. These therapists did not use a lexical pattern which was predominantly composed of technical or theoretical terms derived from literature on psychotherapy. They did of course use technical terms, but these did not compose the common base of their lexis.

In other words, it is probable that we are considering a lexical pattern here which is similar in many ways to that employed by many people. I would argue that some of the patterns of organization to be discussed have relevance to popular lexis. I will also argue that the range of consensus between these observers is very limited. The consensus which does exist appears to be at a general level, indeed, so general as to indicate similarities with the lexis employed by the common population of English language users.

Although the majority of lexical occurrences do not in themselves suggest a lexis that is unique to psychotherapy, there are a large number of occurrences which seem particularly germane to this field. Indeed, these words have particular importance because they frequently function as key words in the text. One key word often requires many modifiers, and common linguistic contextualizers. This might mean that a passage could contain only one or two technical terms, and yet, the rest of the passage could be about those two terms. One might say that those key words are more 'meaningful' or 'important', than the other words in the passage. Therefore, a large part of this discussion will be focused on those words which carry the major weight of meaning in these transcripts.

Primary distinctions

The first category of words which has to be discussed are those words which were identified at the outset as being the focus of this study. These words have been categorized as Primary Distinctions. Perhaps a few words about the meaning and use of the word 'distinction' are warranted here.

The notion of distinction has been applied to this study because it is a word that is frequently used by Maturana and Von Foerster. The idea of the fundamental epistemological importance of drawing distinctions originated in the work of G. Spencer-Brown (1969) in his book *Laws of Form*. It is a very useful term in the general theories of autopoietics and constructivism. The basic notion behind this word is that nothing exists until it has been distinguished by an observer. The observer participates in bringing forth existence through the act of distinction. Therefore, the act of distinction is itself a primary process without which nothing has form.

In this particular study, certain words have been distinguished as being the central distinctions, and these include: change, shift, process, relationship,

and happen. So in some sense everything which emerges through this study can be said to be more refined distinctions within the general distinctions that have been specified.

These primary distinctions were left deliberately undefined by the author during his interviews with the observers. This was done so that the observers could draw their own distinctions of these words. The reason for doing this was so that the observers' unique modes of construction could be apparent. There was no intention in this study to define these words, rather, the purpose was to provide some central instigating words which the observers would need to specify themselves. I chose these particular words because they were so difficult to specify, and because the act of specifying them should inevitably reveal a great deal about how the observers organized therapeutic process.

The primary distinction words were also left vague in my initial requests to the participants. I asked them to select an example of therapy in which they felt that something worth noticing, something important, or significant was happening, or which they felt demonstrated a change, or shift. In responding to this request, the participants made choices, and these were important choices, because the segments that they chose to present showed what they considered to be significant, or important.

My decision to ask the participants to make a choice based on their understanding of what is important was made for two reasons. One reason is the same as was just described for the selection of general primary distinction words. The second reason was because of information I obtained during the initial explorations leading to this research. At that time, I found that if I became any more specific about what the participants were to present, we all became more confused. Inevitably, I would try to explain what I thought was important in therapy, and the participants would respond by trying to align their notions of importance with mine. This attempt at alignment would become a coercive or argumentative process, which left neither of us closer to knowing what was expected. I found that when I asked the participants to choose a segment that showed something they thought was important, they had little difficulty in accepting the request. I suspect this was partly because I was asking them to make the choice, and because the word 'important' is sufficiently general that they were given latitude to make their own choices freely.

Each word in the 'Primary Distinctions' category specifies the formal occurrence of an event. When I say formal, I mean that these are very general words in the sense that they do not specify particular 'external' events. Instead they specify the preconditions that must be met first in order for events to be observed.

Predisposition and the operation of distinction

Before anything is brought into existence by an observer, the observer must be predisposed to distinguish that which is distinguished. The emergence of form depends on the observer bringing that form out of the background of all other possible forms. For example, if I want groceries and go to the grocery store, I will notice bread, milk, and so on, and not notice the tires at the automotive parts store.

If I ask observers to talk about change, process and relationship in some counselling sessions, they will tell me little about the clothing of the participants, or the TV monitor we use. What they say will show something of what they mean by these words. One person may go shopping for meat and potatoes, and another might go for fruit and vegetables; but they both go grocery shopping. The primary distinction words which I asked the observers to talk about, were equivalent to the word 'shopping'. This research was designed to let us notice what they looked for.

I was using the word predisposition above to refer to what we observe as our patterns of observing some things and not others. If you shop with a close friend, you know that person is inclined to notice certain things in store windows, regardless of whether she intends to purchase the articles. In this investigation, I have asked the observers to speak about change, shifts, process, and relationship; therefore these words constitute the precondition for their predisposition. They are likely to notice events which pertain, for them, to these general categories. I was asking them to notice certain categories of events, and leaving them to specify the events which constituted these categories. I have included the word 'happen' because it is such a close collocate of the other items they are asked to look for.

Comparison and contradistinction in the operation of distinction

As for the second reason behind the creation of the category 'Primary Distinctions', it had to do with the more general principle which I am advancing as fundamental to this research. This principle applies most particularly to the words, 'change', 'shift', 'happen', and 'process'. This is the notion that in therapy, the most elemental unit of recognition is constituted as a change, shift, process or happening. Although each observer will interpret different changes, shifts, happenings, etc., from what appears to be the same event, they will always construct occurrences that are identified within the general frame of changes, shifts, happenings, and processes.

An occurrence exists in contradistinction to anything else that could have existed; and it exists in comparison to something else that did occur. These ideas of comparison and contradistinction are very closely related to Bateson's idea of binocular vision, and they have been alluded to in the discussion of Von Glasersfeld. Occurrences exist in relation to various references in the world of the observer. Although it is difficult in practice to determine these comparisons and contradistinctions, it is useful to recall that they are being made. If we say that nothing exists, until it is noticed, then the processes involved in noticing are very important, for they relate to the generation of existence.

The purpose of proceeding with this discussion in this fashion is to provide us with the theoretical structure for looking closely at the process and structure of noticing. In a sense the purpose is to pry open a corner of the non-trivial machine (observer) and look at how it operates. By using the notions of comparison and contradistinction I hope that we will have a useful added dimension of description for discussing how observer-therapists go about noticing events.

Modes of distinction and referential systems

Because I am interested in how these observers organize therapeutic process, I have separated those words which seem to have most explicit reference to the actual mechanism of distinguishing. I have employed, as a central term in this category 'Modes of Distinction' the word 'difference'. This word has of course been chosen because of it's importance in the cybernetic information processing theory of Bateson.

I have also selected several other words which function as operators of distinction. These include: not, begin, continue, and same. My suggestion is that these words operate in much the same way as the word difference. In a pure theoretical sense, 'difference' is the primary function in the creation of information. However, in a slightly more pragmatic sense, difference can be thought of as occurring through a variety of parallel processes. For example, when something is said to continue, it is observed as being the same over time. Now in this case, time is the difference, while that which is observed is apparently constant. One notices 'continuation' because one has a referential context which includes time, and when the context changes in time, while some other aspect of the context does not, a difference exists within the overall matrix.

One could explain the distinction of 'continuation' through reference to difference, but I think it is useful to say that there are certain primary operators of distinction which operate in the same way that we say 'difference' operates, and yet which are sufficiently distinct in common language to warrant inclusion in a class which has been called 'Modes of Distinction'.

I think this is an important category, and I have made these somewhat abstruse theoretical arguments to defend its existence in theory. In practice, I think the existence of this category is a little more clear. For one thing, the high frequency of the word 'not' indicates to me that observers of therapy distinguish events largely by reference to the non-existence of events. I see these as binocular events involving references to both the events being described and the events not being described. Binocularity takes many forms, one of which is the negative reference.

Events do not exist in themselves, they exist through reference to something else. When an observer observes, the event which is observed exists through reference to the world of the observer. The referential base for distinction may not always be immediately obvious, but it is always there. An observer-therapist tends to refer to aspects of the world of therapy. However this world is so large that it can include almost anything. An observer might describe an event through reference to the supposed feeling state of the client, or the observer might refer to a theoretical context, or the observer might simply distinguish an event through reference to another action of the client, either

imagined or apparently factual. This is an important consideration which I will refer to throughout the remainder of this discussion.

At this stage I want to indicate the theoretical substance of the category, 'Modes of Distinction', and point out that the observers were involved in a binocular referential activity when they distinguished events. Some of the lexical vehicles for conducting this activity have been included in the modes of distinction category, but of course, the referential activity of distinction operates through many vehicles. It would be very interesting for example to consider the grammar of reference - which I think might involve devising a method for discussing patterns of antecedent, and consequent references.

We find that the notion of reference is crucial in making sense of how therapists organize meaning. In the section on the textual analysis I will discuss how observers tend to describe a referential event in order to distinguish the particular event being described. The referential activity links the conceptual label for an event with the observed action. Referential statements are often prefaced with 'because', 'like', 'when', 'I would have...', 'She's not...', and so on. But as I said, this will be a topic for further discussion.

Aspects of distinction

This category includes all the various sub-categories of words which are used by observers to specify the distinctions they draw. As I indicated earlier, these categories were created as more general forms of the words that were commonly used by all therapists. Therefore, these categories are generated out of the consensual patterns of expression. Notice that the largest categories include: cognitions, verbal expressions, behaviors, internal states, and professional actions.

Although I am not attempting to discuss inter-session lexical differences at this point, perhaps some consistencies across sessions could be observed. Perhaps the most obvious feature in this regard, is that basically the same patterns of words, with varying frequencies, are use across all sessions. This is not entirely true, but it is sufficiently true that one can notice those words which have been used to describe certain sessions, but which are not used to describe other sessions.

The similarities between sessions are notable. They provide the common language of description. The 'qualities' of description commonly

include 'good, and 'right'. The 'cognition' words include 'think', 'know', 'mean', 'agree', 'idea', and 'conscious', with some use of 'assume', 'insight', 'understand', and 'aware'. I would suggest that these observers might have a refined sense of the personal relativity of their statements. They constantly qualify their statements with, 'I think that...', or 'I know .... because...' They talk about what things mean in the knowledge that meaning is provisional and depends on who is determining the meaning.

Cognitions

As I have noted previously, the relatively large number of words in the category 'cognitions' indicates that a large number of observations of therapy are described as cognitive types of activities. These activities may pertain to the clients, the therapists or the observers. The words in the cognitions category refer to internal mental processing. The referential processes which are involved in explicating these words are typically inferential. That is, the observer must infer cognitive activity from assumptions made about available information. The 'cognition' words are often used as components of inferential statements. Notice that inference is a special case of reference. In the case of inference, the observer refers to personal conclusions, or assumptions about the observed events. I am suggesting here that words which denote cognition indicate another aspect of binocular vision.

Behaviors

The 'behaviors' category is a complement to the cognitions category. In this case the references are made about externally derived information. I am using the word 'external' here to distinguish cognitive references from behavioral references. I do not mean to suggest that external sources of information are more objective or verifiable. I am suggesting that behaviors constitute a different kind of reference than cognitive references, and we will see that in practice, observers frequently alternate between these two types of reference in their descriptions.

Notice that there seem to be two sub-sets of behaviors. One set includes words that refer to specific behaviors such as 'nod', 'laugh', 'shook/shake', and 'lean'. The other sub-set involves words which are less specific, such as, 'respond', 'follow', 'tend' and, 'support'. The first sub-set, while relatively

infrequent, includes words which are often key words in the text. These words represent the one extreme of specificity, whereas a word like 'know' represents another extreme. The sub-set of specific behaviors provides an important category for distinguishing between individual sessions and observers. This category includes words which refer to the level of simple actions. With these words we can notice differences in the kinds of simple actions that observers talk about. The second sub-set includes words which refer to categorized actions. I think it is arguable whether these words should be categorized as 'professional actions' or as 'behaviors', because each of these words also collocate with basic systemic therapeutic technique. I have categorized them here because these words are part of the popular language, and because they are often used to refer to client behavior as well as therapist behavior.

Internal States

The categories of 'internal states' is similar to the 'cognitions' category. The common members of the 'intention' set are 'want', and 'try'. 'Want' is the most common of these two. It is used both to describe the intentions of clients and therapists, and the intentions of the observer. 'Want' and 'try' are important words because they show something about the degree of directed effort that is involved in these observers' descriptions of therapy. There is no other category, or any words that refer to a complementary process of dissolution or effortlessness. Therapy, according to these observers is at least partly a directed, deliberate, constructive activity. The generation of therapeutic reality involves directed activity, both by the ostensible participants, and the hidden participants - those who observe and describe. Reality is not brought forth inadvertently, without intentional participation.

The category 'internal states' was generated from the word 'feeling' that therapists commonly used. Other words in this category include 'depressed', 'emotion', 'energy', 'motivate', 'interest', 'experience', 'curious', and 'vulnerable'. The words in this category were used with moderate frequency, and in certain descriptions some words occurred frequently. Notice that these words mostly refer to general states. These observers did not typically specify internal states. There were some exceptions to this, and these are notable. These words were often key elements in descriptions, and as such required further specification. However, the specifications were not usually in the form of

internal states. I would suggest that these observers use 'internal state' words as indicators of large scale topograhic features in the process of cartographing therapeutic process.

Personal Identities

The 'personal identities' category includes the words which identify the characters in the sessions that were described. In general, the words 'client', and 'therapist' were included here, though there were exceptions. The other words were, 'boy', 'kid', 'mother', 'mommy', 'family', 'sister', depending on who was involved. Although these words may seem self-explanatory, some of the subtle distinctions of identity were crucial to the processes described. Equally, the presence of some personal identifiers in some descriptions and not in others may have indicated important differences between observers.

Professional actions

The category of 'professional actions' was used in part as a means for gathering together words which obviously collocated with therapeutic technique. These words may or may not have been used to refer to therapeutic technique in the text. Some words, like, 'support', 'control', 'directive', 'reinforce', 'challenge', 'instructive', 'motivate', 'rapport', 'direct', and 'work' seem to belong to a very general set of counselling technique. One might refer to gestalt, behavioral, or communications theory here, but the words are really too commonly used to suggest a pattern. Other words such as, 'set-up', 'intervention', 'relabel', 'reframe', and 'paradox' are more obviously collocated with systems therapy techniques. It is notable that very few obviously 'systemic' words are used by this group of therapists. This might suggest a drift to eclectic description or eclectic technique. This could also suggest that 'systemic' is largely described through common words. Perhaps the identifying features of this sort of therapy pertain to the particular utilization of these common words. Unfortunately, this investigation is not designed to distinguish between these observers and other observers.

Uncharacterized

I have also included a category of words called 'uncharacterized'. The words included in this category are unique, and pertain to particular events in the sessions described. They may usefully be viewed as uncharacterized,

because in themselves they characterize individual sessions. For example, the word 'bus' was commonly used in descriptions of Tim's session, and the words 'pink slip' were used in descriptions of Gary's session. This list of uncharacterized words would have been much longer had I categorized words which were only used to describe individual sessions. However, the words that were used to describe individual sessions were used infrequently, and so were not included in the list of commonly used words which were categorized.

The lists of words which were used either by individual observers, or in descriptions of individual sessions are extremely important. These words, while not commonly used, are nevertheless crucial to the identification of differences between sessions and between observers. The categories of words that have been described above generally identify the consensual base of lexical items. The lists of words used to describe individual sessions, and used by individual observers, identify variations from consensus, and in this sense they carry a weight of meaning disproportionate to their frequency of use.

The notion that seldomly used words can be important indicators of difference can be explained partially by the nature of referential distinction of meaning. One of the general phenomena which can be observed in these descriptions is that observers often do not say that which is most obvious, or most fundamental to their referential base of meaning. By this I am saying that observers infer from implicit assumptions. For example, no observer said, "Therapist X is trying to help client Y." I would suggest that this was not stated because it was assumed. Therapists who observe therapy assume that the function of therapy is to help clients. I could suggest many other unstated assumptions, which might be more or less acceptable to the reader.

I am not suggesting that because observers have implicit inferential 'meaning worlds', one is free to make assumptions about observers' assumptions. I am suggesting that one crucial aspect of investigating how observers construct therapeutic process, is the activity of carefully noticing both implicit and explicit references. One powerful method for doing this is by noticing the words observers use which are distinctly unique from the consensual lexical collocations. This method is equally useful in determining the particular explicit and implicit references which are involved in the descriptions of individual sessions.

Unique words reveal referential foundations because they are identifiable topographic demarcators. They point out changes in the landscape of description. Without these identifiers the territory tends to be featureless, and in a sense we cease to notice even the most obvious characteristics. We simply see it as the same. So for example, when a group of therapists are talking together, they are involved in a pattern of discussion in which the basic assumptions they each make individually, and which they make collectively, are typically unstated. The assumptions are woven into the ongoing discussion. They are noticed when something disrupts the pattern. A therapist with a different perspective might enter the discussion, or perhaps one of the therapists suggests a different idea which requires people to reconsider their assumptions.

To a large extent, the majority of our referential base is forever hidden. The fabrics of cultural and individual associations which underlie language are too much a part of us to be seen. This is why indicators of difference are so important. They provide points of entry for understanding the underlying fabric of associations and references. They allow us to mark off a certain portion of the territory, notice how it is constructed, and to compare it with the surrounding territory.

C General Comments on the Textual Analysis

I have chosen to analyze the text in a particular way for a variety of reasons. For one, this method was selected in an effort to reveal the semantic patterns or contexts of the lexical items. As the study progressed I became particularly interested in the idiographic referential foundations which on could construct out of the descriptions. The textual analysis was also created in order to provide the reader with a context of meaning for the lexical analysis. Thirdly, I wanted to look at the patterns of interaction between levels of descriptions. This last statement derives from the idea of using the orders of epistemological analysis described by Bateson and Keeney.

Behaviors

The reader will notice that the text has been categorized in three levels, namely, **behaviours, explanations, and concepts.** One level includes observers' statements which describe simple actions, or behaviors, and

categories of actions, or behaviors. This category is identified as 'Behaviors'. I can not provide the reader with the explicit criteria which I used to determine the aspects of descriptions which were included as behaviours. My criteria depended on my choice of which aspects of description related to descriptions of behaviours. While making these choices, I noticed that one sentence might include aspects of description which related to all three levels of textual description. Although the specific descriptions of behaviours may not always have been defined by complete sentences, I would say that the behavioural level of description was the easiest of the three levels to distinguish. I defined a behaviour as a description of an action. I did not distinguish between descriptions of simple actions and descriptions of categories of action. In other words, the statement, "I noticed tears on her cheeks." would not have have been distinguished from, "She was crying". Evidently, the choice of what constitutes a simple action, and what constitutes a complex category of actions depends on the level of analysis that one wants to accomplish. In this case, I would say that I defined actions in much the same way that they they would be defined by systemic therapists, particularly those who follow the strategic approach (i.e., *Tactics of change*, Weakland, Fisch & Segal, 1982).

Explanations

The second category includes those parts of the observers' descriptions which pertain to explications of the behaviors. This category comprehends the order of recursion known as 'context', as well as the notion of 'reference'. This category is a hybrid created by the author for the particular purposes of this discussion. I am suggesting that the order of contextual recursion can be considered as including the context of the describer or observer. If we include the context of the describer in this level, then it is necessary to include a method for accessing the information that can be obtained about the describing. I am suggesting that this can be achieved by noticing the references that the observer makes when explicating behaviors. If this argument is plausible, then perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that Keeney's order of context, in which he included categories of interaction and descriptions of interaction, could be modified for this particular investigation to include the interaction of the observer with the observer's referential base. This second category has been called 'Explanation'.

Concepts

The third category has been identified as 'Concepts'. This category is similar to the order of recursion that Bateson and Keeney referred to as 'metacontext', and in which they included categories of choreography and descriptions of choreography. In this study, this category includes descriptions which encapsulate a range of behaviors, and which typically require an explanation. A 'concept' is not always explained, nor is it always presented in tandem with the behaviors which it incorporates. Concepts may be described through references to other concepts. A concept is typically formulated in the text as a focal statement. It is seldom isolated from explicit reference, and when it is, it is described by words or phrases like, "This is important...." , "what I noticed was....", or, "what the therapist did was....". In other words, there were semantic and grammatical indicators which focused the attention on the concepts.

D Overview of Individual Sessions

Now that I have given an overview of the general organization of the terms used in the analyses of the transcripts, I will offer some comments on the individual sessions. During the course of these comments it will be necessary to introduce some new terms, and these will be described in the course of the presentation. As I said earlier, these comments will combine elements of both the textual and the lexical analyses. Following these comments on the individual sessions, some comparative comments on the similarities and differences between these sessions will be presented.

As a preliminary to these session analyses, I think it may be useful for the reader to have an overview of the sessions which were presented for the observers to review. The reader will recall that all five observers selected brief (about four minutes) examples of therapy sessions they had conducted. The observers selected the particular intervals themselves. For the purpose of this overview, I have simply prepared summaries of my impressions of the consensus of the five observers about each session.

There is an aspect of all these sessions which I have not commented on in detail, but which the reader should keep in mind while reviewing these summaries. In the last paragraph I stated that the therapists selected their own video-tapes, and I have said elsewhere that the therapists were given the

freedom to select the segments which they wanted to show. My comment here is that the therapists selected very different examples to show. These differences existed not only in terms of the types of clients, and the styles of counselling, but also in terms of the intentions that the counsellors had for choosing the segments that they did. For example, Devon selected a segment that she used in other contexts to demonstrate her style of counselling. Similarly, Gary chose a segment that he had used for instructional purposes both before and after this study. Tim had to arrange a special video-tape session in order to prepare his segment. Therefore, he was aware in advance of conducting the particular session from which his segment was taken that some part of the session would almost undoubtedly be used. Neil was a late addition to the study, but his video-tape was among the first to be received. I asked him for a tape one week, and because he had video-tape facilities available at his place of work, and because he simply provided a segment of the first session that became available for taping, he had the segment available for me the next week. Gisela, who worked in the same setting as Neil, although not for as many hours as Neil, took about three months to prepare a video-tape.

The aspects of choice which I have just described originate from my perspective as the researcher. I did not ask the therapists to describe why they had selected these particular segments. Nevertheless, I would suggest that there is a radical difference of intention between Neil's choice of a segment and Devon's choice. Neil made no effort to choose a segment of which he was especially proud, or which he felt exemplified the highest qualities of his counselling. I would suggest that both Devon and Gary did make the attempt to provide exemplary segments. They indicated as much to me in private conversations. The possible effects of these various intentional choices, and the reasons why these choices were made, or what these choices mean, will not be elaborated here. I make these comments so that the reader is alerted to this aspect and so that the reader can make his or her own interpretations

Narrative session summaries

Session 1, Gary

In the first example, the therapist spoke with a single mother and her fifteen year old son, regarding problems she was having in getting the boy to cooperate with her at home. The observers were in general agreement about

several events, and interactions. They said that the therapist was very interactional because he used himself, his voice and his body in many interactions with the clients. They spoke about how he moved forwards and backwards in his chair, about how he shook the boy's hand, about how he modulated his voice to make points emphatically. They spoke about he used key words like 'mother' and 'mommy', 'fifteen years old' and 'five years old'. They spoke of how he asked the son and mother to interact and talk with each other.

They spoke of how he affirmed and validated the boy by complimenting him for giving his mother a full-time job as a mommy. They commonly referred to this as a process of reframing or relabelling the boy. They talked about how the mother at first seemed cool about this suggestion but became more receptive to Gary by the end of the session. They mentioned that they could tell she had become more receptive by the way she was nodding her head in synchrony with the therapist's head nods, and by the way she was laughing, relaxing, and enjoying herself by the end.

During the session, they mentioned how Gary had talked to the boy about giving his mommy a pink-slip, and how the boy had not at first understood what a pink-slip was. They said that Gary introduced the idea that the boy could have a party when his 'mommy' became a mother in order to join with the boy and build his desire to cooperate. They said that this joining with the boy seemed to make him stronger, so the therapist needed to join with the mom and get her support. They said he did not get her agreement right away, but that by validating her as a mother and talking about some of her experiences with the boy when he was a child, he had gained substantial agreement with her by the end of the session. They spoke of how the therapist was trying to help the boy grow up and be more in control.

There were several theoretical explanations which the therapists commonly used in describing this session. These terms included: reframing, relabelling, the theme of maturation, enactment, decentralizing, interaction, validating, joining, pacing, and control.

In general, the therapists were saying that the therapist was: 1 - Reframing the boy's misbehaviour as giving his mother a full-time job as a mommy; 2 - Interacting with the boy and the mother in such a way that the boy and his mother spoke directly with each other; 3 - The boy began to speak

more maturely and more strongly as he began to tell his mother how she could stop being a 'mommy'; 4 - Although the mother seemed to have some initial doubts about this plan, the therapist seemed to have her support by the end.

The general theme of the process was that Gary was: 1 - trying to help the boy grow up and separate from his mother, and; 2 - trying to help the mother recognize and alter the role she was playing in keeping her son young and dumb. They said that the major shift was that by the end of the segment the boy was talking louder and being more assertive, and that the mother was more receptive to Gary's suggestions.

Session 2, Devon

In this session, Devon was working with a single woman who had presented problems with weight control, and who spoke in this session about her television watching habits. The conversation revolved around the theme of motivation. The therapists spoke about how Devon mirrored the woman's motionlessness and that perhaps she was inducing trance through this stillness. Some therapists said that Devon's stillness reflected the woman's passivity in her life, and that this mirroring seemed to be part of a general process of pacing the woman, joining with her, and entering into her world-view. They spoke about a high degree of cooperation and about how gentle, playful and unintrusive Devon was. They said that the client was enjoying herself and having fun.

In some fashion, most of them talked about the way that Devon asked the paradoxical question, "How can you keep yourself stuck for the next twenty years?" Several mentioned how this question was crucially different from the question, "What would you not have to do?" They said that by the end of the segment the client had mobilized her energy, as evidenced by the way she was giggling while talking about the effort she would have to make to stay stuck in front of the TV. They suggested that while she was talking about the efforts she would have to make, she gained a new realization that she was actually really motivated, but in a way that she had not known before.

Therapists pointed to several changes: the woman's louder voice, her laughter, her increased physical animation, and the way she spoke with excitement and interest about TV watching. These indicated that there had been an important change for her. This change was referred to as a sudden

shift or click, when the client realized how motivated she was to watch TV. This click coincided with her laughter. There was some mention of how the problem had been subtly reframed and recontextualized. They said that although the client had resisted the realization, eventually she had to give in. They said her surrender was facilitated by the gentle, humorous, playful way that Devon interacted with her.

Session 3, Gisela

In this session Gisela was working with a young couple in an initial session. The wife was talking about an incident during Christmas at her parent's home when her husband had expressed some anger in a way that troubled her mother and father. The observers generally agreed that this was largely an information gathering session during which Gisela remained a little distant, but also open and receptive. The observers felt that although she asked circular questions which encouraged information about how the couple interacted with themselves and the wife's parents, Gisela remained central to the interactions which occurred in the segment.

Several observers commented on the incident when the wife started crying and Gisela stood up, got the kleenex and handed it to her. Most of them also mentioned how the husband did not really participate except when he said that he was married to his wife and not her family. They also spoke about how Gisela had asked the wife whether she had told her mother to stay out of this. One observer said that this suggestion was the major intervention. Others suggested that the major change was the clients' increasing ability to talk openly with the therapist.

The observers suggested that the general process involved Gisela's focus on the pattern of communication. They said that she gained important information about why the clients had come for counselling. In particular, she learned about the disguised fact that the wife's mother had asked her daughter to attend.

Session 4, Tim

In this segment Tim was working with a young man who was lacking confidence and direction. The sequence was excerpted from the end of the second session. The observers commonly spoke about how Tim prepared for

an intervention by first describing the unsuccessful pattern of problem solution behavior. Then he asked the boy if he would be willing to do something different, and the boy agreed. They said that Tim then increased the client's anticipation and potential to respond to his suggestion by diverting to a different topic, and pacing the boy through his normal experience of getting on a bus, sitting, and waiting for arrival. They said the boy was attentive, and focused on what Tim was saying.

They spoke about how this process involved the boy at an imaginal level, and they said there were aspects of hypnotic trance induction in the way that Tim spoke slowly, softly, gently, and created an internal search process. They also suggested that Tim was creating confusion in the boy because he did not know why he was talking about the bus; and that he was utilizing this confusion to make the boy more receptive to what he was about to suggest.

They said that Tim delivered a paradoxical intervention which was essentially a symptom prescription. They spoke about how the boy seemed to accept the ridiculous notion of making himself as depressed as possible, even though he was probably perplexed. They suggested that the intervention had hit the bulls-eye and was effective because they saw the boy nodding and then laughing.

The observers commonly said that from the outset Tim seemed to know more or less what he was going to do and that he was directing the process in a certain way. Most observers suggested that at the end of the intervention, when Tim ~~suggested~~ that the boy should stop being depressed when he got off the bus, that Tim was giving the boy the control over his emotions by showing him that he could both bring on the depression, and bring it to an end.

Session 5, Neil

In this session, Neil was working with a young woman who was talking about her relations with her family, particularly with her sisters. One observer described a distance between Neil and the client in the way that he was positioned further from the client physically than most of the therapists in the other examples. Some also noticed that they could only see his feet on the screen and they said that this made it difficult for them to comment on the process.

Some suggested that Neil had good rapport with his client because she seemed comfortable talking to him, and he seemed to know a lot about her. They suggested that Neil was gathering information, perhaps in preparation for an intervention. They said he was focusing on her, and that he seemed to have an idea in his own mind about some of the different ways of thinking that he would like her to have. They suggested that he was leading her to consider various cognitive alternatives, particularly, that her sisters, whom she felt were superior to her and excluded her, were perhaps vulnerable and less than perfect. The observers said that he used questions which were directed to obtain certain responses and that he continued to ask those questions until he got the responses that he wanted. Once he got the responses he wanted he affirmed them by saying things like, 'that's right', or 'uh uhn'.

The most common description of the process was something close to 'entertaining alternative perspectives'. They said that Neil knew what he wanted, that he challenged the client, that he was focusing on issues, and that he probably did help her entertain some alternatives. There were some suggestions that maybe this girl, who had been sexually abused as a child, was continuing to treat Neil in the same way that she treats other men in her life, namely by giving him, or them, what they want. Some observers felt that she may have been trying to give Neil the answers that he was looking for. They did not refer to a major change, although they thought that maybe a beginning had been made in some areas.

E Analyses of individual sessions

Gary's Session

Lexical Analysis

Words used in all descriptions of Gary's session that were not used in all descriptions of any other session:

boy, change, good, right, voice

Words used in all descriptions of Gary's session that may also have been used in all descriptions of other sessions:

"?", difference, mother, not, say, talk, think

Lexically, Gary's session was notable in being described with five primary distinction words, and together they were used with greater frequency than in any other session description.

The following words were the 20 words most frequently used to describe Gary's session: mother 72, not 40, kid 39, think 38, boy 29, say 31, talk 28, want 27 , know 26, frame 22, mommy 19, change 18, problem 18, right 18, different 16, agree 18, party 15, therapist 14, shift 14, behave(iour) 14.

This list gives us the predominant lexical consensus about Gary's session. Notice the set collocated with age and familial position (boy, kid, mommy, mother). Observers of Gary's session spoke often of talking, saying, thinking and knowing. As with other sessions, Gary's session is identified by an emphasis on verbal expression and thought. There is a lot of intentional activity indicated by 'want', and much distinction is conducted with the modal operator 'not'. The frequent use of 'change' and 'shift' suggests that observers at least described Gary's sessions in these terms. The absence of words in this list that could be categorized as 'internal states' is notable.

So far this sessional description has indicated areas of similarity between the lexical consensus about Gary's session and the lexical consensus about all sessions.

The following words were used most frequently in descriptions of Gary's session: age, agree, assume, boy, change, engage, experience, express, frame, good, important, join, kid, language, mother, positive, process, receptive, refine, relabel, right, role, success.

Here one can notice some of the words that distinguish Gary's session from the other sessions. These differences do not necessarily indicate that all observers were in agreement. They simply show that when all observers are considered as a group, these are the words they used most frequently to describe Gary's session. Notice the existence of words having to do with age (kid, boy, mother); the qualitative modifiers (important, positive, good); the existence of a set that is largely technical (engage, experience, express, frame, process, receptive, refine, relabel, role, join); and the individual importance of the words agree, assume, change, and success.

The following words were used less frequently in the description of Gary's session than in the description of other sessions. (words have been included here which were commonly used in descriptions of other sessions, but

were used less frequently in descriptions of Gary's session): focus, fun, information, lead, listen, look, open, raise, respond, strategy, word, work. Among the words least frequently used to describe Gary's session there seems to be one noticeable set that might be collocated with observation (look, listen, focus).

The words in the least frequently used category seem to conflict with some of the words in the most used category. We will probably need to look at the textual analysis to make sense of the comparison of least used words with most frequently used words, but perhaps I could suggest a tentative interpretation here. In Gary's session, the observers spoke frequently about distinctions of age and familial position, and they spoke frequently about therapeutic techniques that were initiated by the therapist.

The words that were notably absent have to do with focused attention, openness, responsiveness, and strategy. Although this is tentative at this point, I believe we will see this comment corroborated in the textual analysis. Gary's session was directed and controlled by a therapist, who sometimes appeared not to be observant of the responses of the clients, and who appeared to lack a strategy.

At the same time, one should also notice the frequent use of the words 'success', 'good', 'important', 'change', and 'shift'. With these items available, one could say that in the larger lexical perspective, we have indicators that Gary's session was well received.

The following words were used only in descriptions of Gary's session:

Mommy (19)
Grow (10)
Bought (6)
Angry (4)
Enthusiasm (3)
Horn (2)
Balance (1)
Bugged (1)
Compliment (1)
Lighter (1)
Softened (1)
Liveliness (1)
Hierarchy (1)
Real ass (1)
Party (15)
Young and dumb (9)
Age (5)
Punctuate (4)
Refinement (3)
Stern (2)
Adjusted (1)
Consultant (1)
Disease (1)
Mini-segment (1)
Status (1)
Hooked (1)
Decentralize (1)
Firing (1)
(full-time)Job (15)
Pink slip (6)
Learn (4)
Dyad (3)
Problem-solving (3)
Receptive (1)
Anchored (1)
Differentiation (1)
Fuck you (1)
Ploy (1)
Struggles (1)
Driver's seat (1)
Young and dumb (1)

Some of these words collocate with the sets generated from the most frequently used words list. The use of words like hierarchy, decentralize, problem-solving, differentiation, and status, indicates that the technical set suggested earlier could be further described as a set having to do predominantly with structural therapy.

It is difficult to collocate most of these words among themselves because they are individually unique. Perhaps a few general comments can be made. Notice the colloquial nature of many of the words. There is a strong 'street' influence in the lexis that observers used to describe Gary's session. Notice the polarized pairs of words which relate to oppositional interactions (firing-job, fuck you-compliment, softened-stern, angry-enthusiasm, receptive-bugged, liveliness-disease). The opposition between these pairs is similar to the complements boy-kid, and mother-mommy.

Let me summarize how the findings of the lexical analysis might reflect on a consensual description of Gary's session. There is a strong emphasis here on many structural therapy distinctions, a careful distinction of familial roles and positions, much discussion of change and shift, frequent use of the qualifiers good, important, and right. The session involves much agreement and joining, much thinking, talking and saying; perhaps less focus, listening, looking, openness, and strategizing. The session seems to be typified by colloquial polarities. One half of these polarities refer to very positive traits and interactions, and the other half refer to negative traits and interactions. One might suggest that one predominant consensual inference is the existence of an opposition between cooperation and antagonism.

Textual analysis

At the elemental behavioral level of simple actions, there are some similarities between the descriptions of Gary's sessions. The one event which all observers referred to, was the request that Gary made to the boy to talk with his mother. Observers talked about this event in reference to different concepts, but this is the one event that was described by everyone as being important.

The second most frequently discussed event had to do with the way the mother was more receptive to Gary and his suggestions by the end of the session. Three other events were discussed slightly less frequently. These

included: the repeated and deliberate use of certain key words, or key word phrases; the story that Gary told about calling a child in with the last stern yell and the story the mother responded with about using her car horn to call the child in; and the strongly interactive participatory involvement of the therapist in the session.

Other behaviors which were mentioned included: Gary told the boy he was good son; Gary asked the boy if he wanted to grow up; Gary used the idea of the pink slip; the boy was talking stronger at the end; this session was just one example of digging the groove; the mother was more relaxed at the end; there were too many interventions; the assessment of whether there has been a change will need to wait until next session; and the boy agreed that he was doing a good job.

At the level of explanations there is very little convergence. The observers generally exhibited different styles of reference. I will discuss individual observers later, but it can be noted here that the observers referred to different aspects of the process they observed, and different dimensions of their own cognitive processes when they were explaining the simple actions. For example, if we consider the simple action which all observers mentioned, we notice that each observer explains it differently. Gary says about it, "I unbalanced the dyad and caused them to shift the hierarchy of their interaction." Devon said, "Rather than the mother blaming the kid, they were led to see it as a mutual interaction in which they were both being bugged." Gisela said, "The boy acknowledged Gary's request, and agreed with him about it." Tim said, "The boy was put in the driver's seat, and began working in a direction that was defined by the therapist." Neil said, "The boy started out of control, and then ended up telling his mother what she should do to take care of him - it's almost paradoxical."

My purpose is not to split hairs, but I think one can see some important distinctions between the referential patterns of these observers. For example, Gary's explanation is overtly conceptual. His references are theoretical, or more particularly, structural. Devon's reference is to the mundane (as indicated by the use of the colloquial term 'bugged') nature of ordinary relations between two people. Gisela refers to the interaction between the boy and the therapist, and she does this in simple, slightly formal, precise terms. Tim's reference is metaphoric, and deals with two aspects of control - the boy's control over his

behavior, and the therapist's control over the boy. Neil also refers to control, but through referring to the cognitive structure of control in this situation.

Let us move on to consider the conceptual statements which were used to describe Gary's session. At this level, there is about as much convergence as there is at the level of simple actions. There is one concept about which all observers similar views, which was that Gary reframed the boy's behavior. One might suggest that the concept of reframing functions as a category of action in the language of these observers. The observers converged in their use of certain behavioral events, and they converged on certain conceptual events. In the sense that they are similar in these respects, there is some similarity between these levels.

The similarity of these levels, which I am suggesting is indicated by the observers' convergence on elements at each level, is extended because there are other, consensual aspects. For example, Gary, Devon, and Gisela, felt that the mother had changed by the end of the session because she felt good about herself and was more receptive to Gary. Gary and Devon spoke about the shift to a relational focus. Neil and Gisela spoke about Gary's use of himself (voice, posture, stories) in the interactions. Devon and Gisela said there had been some change in Gary's relation with the mother, but not yet in the mother's relation with the son. Tim and Neil said Gary put the boy in more control.

There are also considerable divergences between the observers, but these are not the focus at this moment. The idea which I would like to develop here is that for observers who are therapists the conceptual descriptions of therapy operate as a language. There are in this language, lexical elements which are used repeatedly and sometimes they use the same concepts to describe the same events. This is to be expected because therapists receive similar training, and therefore are literate in the same language.

Although the observers may use the same conceptual terms, and although they may refer to the same behavioral actions (and this seems to be true to a limited extent), they do not typically generate textual meanings for either the behaviors, or the concepts through similar methods. I would suggest that this is because the mechanisms for generating the distinction of concepts and behaviors depends on unique individual structures. When we investigate the level of reference we find many different patterns. I would also suggest that these individual referential patterns are implicated in the many different

behaviors and concepts that the observers described. It is true that there were some similarities among the concepts and among the behaviors they described, but it is also true that there were many differences.

Devon's Session

Lexical analysis

Words used in all descriptions of Devon's session and not used in all descriptions of any other session:

continue, motivate, TV, laugh

Words used in all descriptions of Devon's session that may also have been used in all descriptions of other sessions:

talk, think, client, question, work, "?", not

1: Words used more frequently to describe Devon's session than any other session:

attend, client, continue, create, embedded metaphor, enjoy, explicit, fun, game, gentle, gestalt, humor, hypnosis, implicit, insight, laugh, lead, manoeuvre, mirror, motionless, non-verbal, paradox, pattern, pleasant, probing, process, provocative, realize, rigid, sequence, sense, spoke, unmotivate

2: Words used less frequently to describe Devon's session than any other session:

agree, answer, clear, good, happen, right, seem, shift, specific, try, want.

3: Words used only to describe Devon's session:

Motivate (55)	TV/television (17)	Energy (10)
Twenty (6)	Hobby (4)	Sacrifice (4)
Bullfight (3)	Animate (3)	Humor (3)
Pursuit (2)	Cooperate (2)	Hypnosis (2)
Rigid (2)	Unmotivate (2)	Click/Flip (3)
Essential	Sword-thrust	Fuel
Gas tank	Revelation	Sincerely
Sabotaging	Skin color	Rubbed into
Unthreatening	Dead duck	Manoeuvre
Ownership	Slip and slide	Over the edge
Over the edge	Discover	Closet soaper
Entering	Activate	Drifts
Playful		

4: Words used most frequently to describe Devon's session:

not 63, motivate 55, client 35, talk 34, think 30 say 29, work 25, know 22, therapist 21, problem 18, TV/television 17, little 16, sense 14, change 13 , "?" 13, same 12, process 12

In the descriptions of Devon's sessions there are lexical patterns which are quite different from those found in the descriptions of Gary's session. Notice that the word 'not' was the most frequently used word in descriptions of Devon's session, and that it was used more frequently in descriptions of her session that in any other session. In this case the word is used especially frequently because observers often quoted or paraphrased Devon as saying, "I do not want you to tell me what you do not have to do, I want to hear what you would have to do to stay stuck in front of the TV, or to stay unmotivated for the next twenty years." Devon emphasized the negation of the client's negatively formed response. For the observers, this was a central event. They unanimously spoke about how the negation of the negatively formed response forced the client to respond with a positively formed statement about what she would have to do. When she framed her response positively, she became aware that she was already actively engaged in TV watching. The inevitable implication of this for her was that she was already 'motivated' as a TV watcher. The awareness of this implication was a shift from her presenting image of herself as 'unmotivated'.

The reasons for the frequent and exclusive use of the words 'motivate' and 'TV' in descriptions of Devon's session have been explicated in the previous discussion of 'not'. Notice also that the words 'client' and 'talk' are used most frequently in descriptions of Devon's session. The high incidence of the these words might imply that in this session, the therapist's interlocutor is most clearly identified as a 'client'. This could be the case for a number of reasons; perhaps because there was no other available identity. Notice the distinction between the personal identities in Gary's session and Devon's session. In Gary's session the interlocutors were identified more frequently by their familial position, or as 'Gary'. Perhaps in Devon's session, there is little emphasis on family, and more emphasis on the professional relation of therapist and client. Devon's session also clearly relies on talking, as opposed to other modes of communication or interaction.

Notice also the frequent use of 'think', 'say', 'work', and 'know'. The word 'work' is used more than twice as often to describe Devon's session than any other session. These occurrences in effect balance the frequent use of 'client' and strengthen the evidence for arguing that this session, by consensus of the observers, involves deliberate professional effort. This work also seems to involve a high degree of thought, and this thought could be on the part of the observers.

The words 'sense', occurs more frequently in descriptions of Devon's sessions than elsewhere. This word was used in the descriptions as a synonym for 'impression'. 'Sense', in this usage, connotes a conscious response which is based on perceptions gained intuitively or through a 'gut' reaction. The aspect of the word which connotes 'intuition' collocates with similar aspects of the words, 'hypnosis', 'implicit', 'insight', 'non-verbal', and perhaps, 'embedded', 'metaphor', 'humor', mirror, and 'paradox'. One might suggest that the observers collectively presented a description involving much non-verbal, unconscious, or intuitive communication.

The set of words which collocate with therapeutic technique (game, gestalt, implicit, explicit, sabotage, hypnosis, embedded metaphor, motivate, insight, paradox, manoeuver, ownership, mirror, non-verbal, pattern, provocative, probing, process, lead, revelation, sacrifice, discover, unthreatening) is diverse. Perhaps the most obvious comment to make about this set is that Devon's session was described by theoretical terminology that comes from many orientations to therapy, such as; gestalt, reality, insight, NLP, naturalistic hypnosis, instructional, transactional analysis, strategic, and Systemic. It is also clear that the observers described many techniques. This session was similar to Gary's in the sense that the observers described it with many technical terms.

There were many interesting lexical items in the descriptions of Devon's session. Notice the incidence of words collocated with 'play' (game, gentle, hobby, humor, animate, energy). There are also some distinct metaphors (slip and slide, over the edge, closet soaper, rubbed into, fuel and gas tank, dead duck, bullfight, sword-thrust, click/flip). One might suggest that observers were provoked to extend their language into imaginative and creative forms.

The words which were commonly used to describe other sessions but which were used least often to describe Devon's session are difficult to

organize in sets, or to comprehend. For example, although the observers spoke about mirroring, and pacing, they did not say much about agreement. Although they spoke often about the question Devon asked the client, they seldom mentioned 'answer'. This was also true in Gary's session in which the observers frequently spoke about the questions Gary asked the mother and son, but seldom talked about 'answer'. My suggestion in this case, is that sometimes the words which are seldom used in comparison to their usage in descriptions of other sessions, are words which indicate the implicit referential context. By this I mean that it was obvious to the observers that the client was answering Devon's questions, just as it was obvious that Gary's family was answering his questions. The implication of this is that sometimes the relevant descriptive information is assumed, and not explicitly expressed.

Perhaps one point which can be noticed in the list of words least used to describe Devon's session is the inclusion of the words 'try', and 'want'. The low incidence of these words here can be contrasted with the high incidence of the word 'want' in Gary's session, and the high incidence of 'try' in Tim's session. Whether these words are used in those sessions to describe the 'purposive but frustrated activity' (or however one might describe these two words) of the therapist or client, it is clear that the observers did not describe trying or wanting on behalf of the client or therapist in Devon's session. This is notable in light of the heavily used 'professional-work' set. One might suggest that in Devon's session, actual accomplishment was more notable than attempted accomplishment.

Textual analysis

At the behavioral level there is one event during the course of the session about which all observers spoke about. As I have said, they all described the question which Devon asked the client: "How could you keep yourself stuck for the next twenty years?" There is little deviation in the descriptions. All observers reported the question, with one or two variations in wording. Clearly, this question represents a nodal behavior in the process of therapy.

All observers also spoke about the woman's response to this question, although they described the response in slightly different terms. For example, Gary mentioned the statement, "I notice that when you talk about the TV shows

you seem to get a lot of energy, and that you have a lot of motivation when you pay attention to that." Devon observed, "And she started to say she would have to check the TV guide...and as she did that she leaned forward... and became more animated..." Gisela said, "Just following the steps of what she is doing to do nothing makes it clear to her in a very nice and unthreatening way that she is doing something very positively." Tim reported Devon's statement that, "You really have to be quite motivated to watch these shows, and I can see that you really become quite lively talking about it..." Neil observed, "She begins to see it, not consciously, but she begins to say to herself that this is a hell of a joke, "You know what I'm doing to myself is really funny. It's really funny the way I am screwing myself up.""

These observations are all about what happened within a time boundary of no more than thirty seconds. Notice that Devon has chosen to describe a moment in time just previous to the moment that Gary and Tim are describing. Devon observed the woman's specific behavioral response to the question, whereas Gary and Tim observed Devon's response to the woman's behavioral response. Notice here, as in the descriptions of Gary's sessions, that the observer who is also the therapist, tends to make fewer references to the behavior of the therapist. In part, this could be because the observer who is also the therapist views the tape partially as if he or she were still participating in the session as the therapist.

Gisela's and Neil's behavioral observations of this event illustrate categories of behavior. Notice that Gisela focused on the behavior of the therapist (following the steps, makes it clear to her in an unthreatening way), whereas Neil focused on the behavior of the client ("what I'm doing to myself is really funny"). Gisela spoke about the actions of the therapist, although in all the descriptions that Gisela provided, she never used the word 'therapist'. One might suggest that Gisela saw the actions of a responsible person, without identifying that person with the professional position.

Neil's comments, on the other hand, illustrate another style of observation. In the example above, Neil is recounting a fictionalized version of the client's internal dialogue. This practice was found to be common among some observers. Notice that Neil presented this fictionalized dialogue as if it were true. When I questioned him about this later, he readily acknowledged that the woman had not said this, but he said that she had behaved as though

this is what she was saying to herself. This practice of fictionalizing internal monologue, or in other cases, fictionalizing external dialogue, indicates, from a behavior description level, something of the referential structure of the therapist. In this case, Neil refers to the imagined internal cognitive processes that he supposes the client to be having.

All five observers converged on the idea that there had been a change in the client during this session. Four of the five observers said that the behavior which indicated the change was the client's response to Devon's question, "What do you have to do to stay stuck?" One of the observers, Gary, referred to a future behavior when he described the change that had occurred. He suggested that the client might pick up the TV guide and then remember that Devon had said she would do that, or she might not pick up the TV guide at all, or she might spontaneously do something quite different in relation to watching TV.

The relationship was typically characterized as playful, unthreatening, comic, enjoyable, humorous. The observers suggested that Devon was gentle, and the client was able to make a change without having it 'rubbed into her'. They suggested that both the client and the therapist appeared to enjoy each other's company.

Explanation: At the level of explanation, the observers varied widely in their comments. Two observers, Gary and Gisela, said that they could not determine from the available information just what the implications of the change would be in the future. Notice that the referential structure of these two observers, in the context of the word 'change', relates the vision of current behavior to an imaginary future situation.

Gary explained the reference of present to future with the use of the key words 'cutting the groove'. He suggested that he saw the session as an example of cutting the groove and that he had no way of assessing how deep the groove was. He felt that the woman would probably leave the session and continue doing what she had been doing with some slight alterations, and he felt that these slight alterations, which would probably be in her TV watching habits, would be significant. In this explanation, one can also notice Gary's inference that personality is a concrete substance which can be slowly sculpted by the therapist.

Gisela's explanation, while similar to Gary's in form, is different in referential substance. Gisela suggested that, "Knowing Devon and her work, it [the shift] will probably be useful.", and, "at least she doesn't have the excuse any more that she doesn't know how to motivate herself". Gisela's references are to her own personal knowledge of Devon's professional capacity (which indicates very positive regard), and to her inferences about the client's patterns of cognitive processing. Notice the connotation of an authority-subservient polarity (excuse) in Gisela's inference about the client's cognitive process; the inference that self-knowledge of causal explanations for self-behavior is important to the woman; and finally; notice the use of 'not' (doesn't) in formulating the possibility of change through reference to the negation of an inferred current pattern of cognition.

The other three observers' comments were each different. Devon suggested that "I saw where her motivation was." Notice the reference to 'motivation' as something which could be seen and identified - in this case with certain behaviors (leaning forward, smiling, laughing, talking louder, changed skin color). In this instance, Devon is comparing the existence of motivation with the absence of motivation. Motivation itself is identified with specific behavioral events, so it can be said to exist, or not exist to the extent that the characteristic behaviors exist or do not exist.

Tim's explanation of the change refers to the client's cognitive description to herself of her behaviors. He refers to her cognitive self-descriptions, and infers that the client had been describing herself as doing nothing, whereas at the end of the session she described herself doing something. The basic reference is to cognition, and the inferential distinction is made by contradistinguishing one self-description (or name), with another.

Neil's explanation of the change is, "The client is taking ownership of what she does to have the problem." The basic reference here is to ownership. 'Ownership' has strong connotations for many therapists. While I am not very knowledgeable about how the word is usually used, my own impression is that it has to do with being responsible, being in control, having influence over, and having exclusive possession. Notice the implicit negation in the last instance of usage. 'Ownership' implies that many people do not have control over that which is owned. In other words, part of Neil's pattern of distinction involves inferring distinctions of those who have control, power, influence or 'ownership'.

In the specific case exemplified here, it is not clear who the other person is who would otherwise 'own' the problem. Perhaps the distinction is simply being made between owning and not owning. In either case, one can see that this is a comparison of states of possessing power, influence, or control.

These examples provide a glimpse of some of the referential and inferential patterns which can be generated at the level of explanation in the context of the word 'change' in the descriptions of Devon's session. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space here to review all the explanations in the descriptions of Devon's session. My intention here is not to analyze for the sake of analyzing, but rather to exemplify how referential patterns can be distinguished at the explanatory level by applying the concept of binocular vision (comparison and contradistinction) to observers' explanations.

At the conceptual level there were a wide variety of descriptions, with only two or three overlaps between observers. Here is a brief summary of the concepts which were mentioned:

Gary observed: Devon's body is trancelike, she's mirroring and pacing the woman, her body is a metaphor; Devon is making the implicit explicit; this can be described as information that makes a difference; she uses an embedded suggestion; it's like putting fuel in the gas tank.

Devon observed: I was joining her; I was highlighting the problem maintenance pattern by exaggerating it; I was making the client the source of her own motivation; I was eliciting her natural curiosity; I was harnessing her natural curiosity; I was affirming her motivation.

Gisela observed: Devon let's the client have fun; the realization is there for the client without having it rubbed into her; it [the intervention/question] clicked [for the client]; I don't think anyone could pull this off.

Tim observed: the relationship doesn't jump out at me, it's not center stage; Devon reframes the problem; the client experiences a flip; it's like a bullfight, and there's one moment of truth when the sword is thrust that can not be missed.

Neil observed: the therapist is telling the client that she is just sabotaging herself; there is a certain process of enjoyment between the therapist and client; the client begins to have a sense of humor about her problem.

This variation among concepts is a source of curiosity for me, because there was a relatively high degree of consensus between observers at the behavioral level, at least relative to the consensus that occurred in descriptions of other sessions. So I looked once again at the lexical analysis to find out if perhaps there is a level of convergence that neither the explanatory nor the conceptual statements revealed.

In this review, I first looked for words that all observers used to describe Devon's session, but which were not used by all observers in descriptions of any other session. The words, 'continue', 'laugh', and 'motivate', were found. Then I looked for words that were used by all observers in descriptions of Devon's session and which also may have been used by all observers in descriptions of other sessions. This review found the words, '"?"', 'client', 'not', 'problem', 'say', 'think', and 'work'. While these words do not in themselves tell us what the observers were trying to say, they do provide a clear picture of one aspect of consensus. The first set indicates a unique consensus, one the existed only in the descriptions of Devon's session. These words may have disappeared in the textual analysis of behaviors, explanations, and concepts because they were not key elements in statements, or because they appeared at various levels between observers.

The word 'continue' was used by observers to described Devon's persistent efforts to make the woman answer the question, "What would you have to do". It is clear that all observers noticed the therapist's repeated attempts. One might suggest that these repeated efforts were a crucial component of the process that lead to the changes which the observers described. This case is a good example of how the act of noticing was distinguished through a comparative temporal reference, in which one behavior (questioning) was compared with another equivalent behavior. in this case, equivalence was noticed through inferring a change in temporal context. Perhaps one should not talk about 'inferring' temporal change, because in normal experience, time is assumed to be a constant, and therefore, it seems spurious to observe observers noticing one event occurring after another. But I would argue that in this case, comparison (distinction of similar or equivalent events), depends on distinction of difference in time.

I have included 'continue' as an element of the category 'modes of distinction' because it identifies a method that observers use for noticing. It is a

method which is easily overlooked because we tend to forget our reference to an absolute continuum of time. But of course, the experience of time is relative. Every therapist has had the experience of listening to clients report their problem as, "We always fight.", or,"We never communicate.", or heard clients say at the end of an interview, "Is it time to go already?" It seems that the experience of time contracts, as the events being experienced become more similar. For example, I would guess that if we asked Devon's client what happened in the session she might have recalled Devon asking the question, "What would you have to do to keep yourself stuck?", but I doubt that she would recall that it had been asked repeatedly.

In any case, I simply wanted to describe here how 'continuation' can be understood as a mode of distinction. It is a mode of distinction through which similar events are compared through reference (usually hidden) to time. The observers of Devon's session utilized this mode to identify what may have been an important aspect of the process that lead to change. At least it can be said that 'continue', and 'change' were among the few words that observers used consensually in their descriptions of Devon's session.

Another word among the set of words consensually used by observers which should be commented on is 'laugh'. This word also occurred in some descriptions of Gary's and Tim's sessions. In descriptions of Devon's session, all observers spoke about laughing, and the use of the word collocates with frequent occurrences of such words as, 'enjoy', 'humorous', 'fun', 'playful', and so on. Moreover, the instances of 'laugh' were textually proximate to the descriptions of change, namely, near the time when Devon asked the question and the client responded. The observers' referential processes in noticing laughter were through contradistinction of the previous absence of laughter with the sudden onset of laughter on the parts of both the client and the therapist. In some cases, the concept, change, was described behaviorally, in part at least, as laughter. Neil and Gisela discussed at some length the benefits of enjoyment, humor, and laughter. Clearly, 'laughter', belongs among the list of behaviors or words that all these observer-therapists can include in their descriptions of change.

The word 'motivate' has been discussed. It occurs very frequently in descriptions of Devon's session. I think that in part the reason for this high incidence was that I used the word in a brief introduction to Devon's video-

taped example. However, it was the observers who found the word appropriate, so there must be aspect of the word that belongs among the consensual opinion about this session. In the text, the particular usages of 'motivate' are best identified in the observer's descriptions of change. Typically, the observers associated motivation with the client's response to Devon's question.

Some of the behaviors, explanations, and concepts that were associated with 'motivation' have already been described. One notable feature of the usages of 'motivation' was that the observers varied widely on how they used the word. For example, Gary talked about how the insight derived from making the implicit explicit would provide motivation by making previous behaviors impossible to continue; Devon's definition seemed to be both very abstract and very behavioral - on one hand she said that everyone has 'motivation', and on the other she referred to the specific behaviors that indicate the presence of motivation to her; Gisela did not really explain 'motivation' - she simply indicated that the client had become aware of how she was motivated in one part of her life, and that she could therefore be motivated in another part; Tim talked about motivation metaphorically as a hobby or pleasurable pursuit; and Neil talked about motivation as the result of being in control of one's own behavior.

One comment which can be made about the use of the word 'motivate' is that all observers used it frequently in their descriptions of Devon's session, so obviously, there was something about this session that all observers would describe with the word motivation. We have an idea that this relates closely to the change that observer's said the client made. Despite these forms of consensus, it is very difficult to describe a consensus between observers about what the word 'motivation' means in terms of how it is used. I would suggest that this lack of consensus indicates different referential patterns in the observers. Gary referred to a theoretical orientation involving gestalt and insight. Devon referred to an inference that all persons are motivated, and to certain behavioral indicators. Gisela referred to isomorphic transferability of motivation. Tim's reference was through analogy to the common experience of motivation; and Neil's reference seemed to be through the theory of reality therapy.

The notable feature of these diverging referential patterns is that the observers were in consensus about the use of the word 'motivation' to describe this session, and yet they were explaining the use of the word through different references.

The words, '"?"', 'client', 'not', 'problem', 'say', 'think', and 'work', which were used in all descriptions of Devon's session and which may also have been used in all descriptions of other sessions have mostly been discussed earlier. However, perhaps a few comments on their relevance to determining a consensus about Devon's session, would be useful. The importance of the question, and the use of 'not' in Devon's session has been noted, as have the emphasis on a professional client-therapist working relation. This relation seems to have been typified by 'saying', and 'thinking', in the context of a 'problem'.

The general consensus about this session could be stated as: This is a therapist working with a client to help her with problems of motivation. After much talking, and continued questioning by the therapist, the client changes her behavior noticeably, and seems to become aware that she is already motivated. In particular, the client changes her understanding of her TV watching habits. She had considered that these demonstrated her lack of motivation, and at the end of this sequence, she saw that her TV viewing habits required a lot of motivation. This came as a surprise to her, which she expressed through laughter and more animated physical and verbal activity. Throughout the sequence, the therapist demonstrated a disciplined focus on helping the woman make this shift; and her style of interaction was consistently gentle, playful, and non-threatening. Both the therapist and client appeared to enjoy the process. This is a successful sequence of therapy, and a good example of a professional therapist providing a service to a client.

This summary would, I think, be generally acceptable to all the observers. At the same time, I am fairly sure that if I asked the observers to explain how these processes were connected, or why the sequence worked, there would be much discussion and divergent opinion.

Gisela's session

Lexical Analysis

1. Words used more frequently to describe Gisela's session than any other session:

angry, assertive, aware, challenge, clear, context, convince, credibility, establish, expand, explanation, family, happen, information, interaction, open, perception, position, power, relation, seem, specific, support, therapist, want,

2. Words commonly used in descriptions, but least often used in descriptions of Gisela's session:

control, define, feedback, follow, frame, interpret, little, mature, nod, positive.

3. Words most commonly used in descriptions of Gisela's session:

think 54 , say 45, not 38, mother 38, want 34, information 27, family 26, talk 25, "?" 24 , therapist 23, different 23, know 21, happen 18, relation 17, try 13, posture 12, feeling 12, clear 12, work 12 , look 11

4. Words used only in descriptions of Gisela's session:

Apologize (9)	Daughter (8)	Distant (8)
Emotion (6)	Embarrassed (6)	Married (6)
Kleenex/tissue (5)	Boundary (4)	Communication (4)
Disappoint (4)	Pressure (4)	Wife (4)
Husband (3)	Markers (3)	Map (3)
Laid-back (3)	Convince (2)	Personality (2)
Pushed around (2)	Paper/pen/notes (3)	Risk (2)
Torn	Major	Guilt
Style	Stress	React
Non-response	Waffling	Antagonistic
Expanding	Network	Inaudible
Double-bind	Sandwiching	Soliciting
Questionnaire	Approval-Disapproval	Constant

5. Words used by all therapists to describe Gisela's session, and which are not used in all descriptions of any other session:

family, relation,

6. Words used by all therapists to describe Gisela's session and which may have been used in all descriptions of other sessions:

different(ce), feel(ing), know, look, mean, mother, say, think, want

There are several sets of lexical items in the descriptions of Gisela's session which can be identified fairly readily. Firstly, notice that the only two words used by all observers to describe this session, and which were not used by all observers to describe any other session, are 'family', and 'relation'. These two word distinguish the consensus about this session, and establish a lexical distinction between this session and other sessions. Apparently, there is not a large lexical consensus about this session, and the consensus which does exist appears to be at a general level.

The list of least used words is not easily divided into sets. Individually, the words suggest that the observers do not talk about reframing, interpretation, defining, control, following, maturing, nodding, or positive. These words were used fairly frequently in other sessions, so their lack of use here suggests something about the distinction between Gisela's session and others. Mostly, we get an idea from these words about the techniques that were probably not used in this session.

There is a substantial set of words which collocate, fairly generally, with relation. This set could include: convince, credibility, distant, open, married, communication, wife, husband, boundary, daughter, react, approval-disapproval, antagonistic, non-response, soliciting, challenge, interaction, power, assertive. This set could be entitled, 'conflictual communications in relations'.

'Family' could be collocated with daughter, mother, husband, and wife. The indication in this set is that this session involved these identities. Notice the two pairs of collocations; husband-wife, mother-daughter. The first set distinguishes relation by birth, and the other distinguishes relation by marriage. The relation between these two categories of distinction is often conflictual.

There is a set that can be collocated with the nodal item 'emotion': angry, feeling, embarrassed, guilt, disappoint, stress, and pressure. These words indicate a general area of emotion; they seem to suggest the kinds of feelings which occur when relations between people are strained. The number of items in this set, and the degree of similarity between them establish this set as an important area of consensus between observers.

Notice the absence of a set which would collocate with therapeutic technique. The closest that could be obtained to such a set might be: aware,

challenge, context, convince, credibility, expand, explanation, information, interaction, perception, open, position, power, relation, support, therapist, posture, work, boundary, map, marker, network, communication. Of these, 'information' is the most frequently used. In comparison with the other session descriptions, the word is used about twice as often in Gisela's session descriptions as in any other. The relatively frequent use of 'aware', and 'perception', which relate to the reception of information, emphasis the consensual importance of 'information' and its collocates. Most of these words are not actually related to technique directly, they have more to do with the language that some therapists use. In this case, I would suggest that this language is most closely identified with the language used by therapists who work at improving communications, although there are hints of structural, and cybernetic theories.

Of the words listed directly above, 'information' is the most frequently used. In comparison with the other session descriptions, the word is used about twice as often in Gisela's session description as in any other. The relatively frequent use of 'aware', and 'perception', which relate to the reception of information, emphasis the consensual importance of 'information' and its collocates.

The descriptions of Gisela's session are the only ones which include the item in the 'spatial dimension' category 'distant', and another item in this little used category, which occurs in Gisela's session descriptions is 'position', and this occurs more often in these descriptions than elsewhere. 'Distant' could collocate with 'laid-back' and 'expanding'. These words form an important aspect of the observers' consensus about this session.

Notice that there are more entries in the category of 'verbal expressions' in Gisela's session descriptions than in any other (say, voice, express, explanation, answer, word, talk, response). This category is related to the lexical set described earlier, entitled, 'conflictual communications in relations'.

In summary, the lexis in the descriptions of Gisela's session are focused on relations, communication, conflict, family, and distance.

Textual analysis

Generally, in the descriptions of this session, there were two major areas of focus. One was about the nature of Gisela's relation to the husband and wife

that she was working with, and the other, pertained to the nature of the relation between the husband and wife and the wife's mother.

In the first area, the observers typically said that Gisela was: attempting to join with the couple, to create some trust and openness (and the comments varied about the degree of success she was achieving); gathering information about the problem the couple was having, the relations between those involved, in the problem, and why they had come for counselling.

In the second area the comments varied, but were of the following nature: the husband asserted himself twice during the interview, the wife needed to assert herself more - especially with her mother, the husband and wife had problems between themselves that were masked as problems with her mother; and the mother was intruding too much so the wife needed to tell her to stop intruding.

In terms of the words 'relationship', 'process', and 'change', several summary comments can be made.

In general, the observers described some distance in the relation between Gisela and the couple. They also said that the couple was opening up to her, and that by the end of the session they seemed able to talk more freely. One observer suggested that Gisela had not established credibility.

The process of the session was often described as either 'information-gathering', or 'joining'. One observer suggested that the main process was that the couple was avoiding the real issue of the problem between themselves.

None of the observers said there had been a change per se, although several said that the fact that the counsellor and the clients were participating together indicated a situation that was different from before the clients came for counselling. This progress towards a working relation was the only indication that the observers had that there was a change. One observer felt there was no change, unless gathering information could be counted as a change.

Now that I have described the basic textual consensus about Gisela's session, I will describe some of the precise similarities and differences between the descriptions that observers provided.

At the behavioral level, there was very little convergence among the descriptions.

Gary generally described specific questions, statements, behaviors, and some fictionalized accounts of what he would have done differently, such as:

(direct questions requiring unilateral cognitive responses) "How does that affect you?", "What do you think?"; Gisela listens to the complaints, and the reasons they are in counselling.; the husband interjects; Gisela hands the woman the kleenex; Gisela asks the woman if she has told her mother to stay out of this; I would say, "Do you want your husband to interject? How is that familiar to you?".

Devon described the emotional behaviors of the husband and wife, and the relation between Gisela and the clients. She made behavioral comments such as: they were both pretty open about their opinions and reactions; the husband raised his voice at the end of the session and said, "I married her, not her family."; the woman displays a needed release of emotion when she cries; and, they were definitely opening up to her.

Gisela described the behavioral level in terms of: the couple's relations with each other; her relation with the couple; the woman's emotional expression; and the kind of information she obtained from them. Her comments included statements such as: I asked, "What happened? When?"; they sat apart but he showed caring for her in the way he picked up the conversation from her; I asked a question and she started crying; I was sitting back, taking notes, my body position was not reflecting theirs; I'm not reading off a questionnaire; it was the only time she cried and showed some emotion; he said he married Tina and not her family and that he doesn't like to get pushed around; I found the reason they came was that her mother told her to.

Tim described Gisela's questions, Gisela's intentions, the couples' intentions, the problem the couple is involved in, Gisela's strategy, and the couples' behavior, with comments such as: Gisela asked, "Is it normal that your parents' haven't called, what would be more normal?"; Gisela probes more deeply when she says, "You feel they're really disappointed in you."; the couple already know what the problem is and they are explaining it to Gisela; the wife's parents freeze her out, or put pressure on her if she is not doing well; the guy speaks once or twice, and the woman has the same emotional tone throughout the session.

Neil's behavioral descriptions pertain to: what he would have done; the wife's statements; fictionalizations of the wife's statements; and, inferences about Gisela's behavior. Examples of his behavioral descriptions follow: I would have said, "I don't want you to tell me why your parents sent you here.

Tell me what you want to happen for the three of us."; the wife said, "I went to see my family doctor, and he said that I should tell my mother."; the wife says, [fictional] "You be nice to my parents." Mike says, [fictional] "Screw that."; she says, [fictional] "I'm afraid that mom will get mad and ...., and Mike will get mad and ...., and I'm afraid ~~to talk to~~ my dad because he is disappointed."; the therapist has reinforced that the parents stay out of this.

Although there are some similarities between the observers' descriptions of the behaviors they notice in Gisela's session, it is difficult to say what they are without altering the text itself. This difference between behavioral descriptions arouses some questions, especially because there is at least some convergence on crucial behaviors in other sessions. I would like to offer some comments on why Gisela's session is described differently at the behavioral level than other sessions.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, Gisela's session was poorly recorded. Most observers had to watch it twice before they could make out all the words. The inaudible quality of the tape was mentioned by Devon. I would have suggested that Gisela prepare another tape, but this tape took a long time to prepare, so finally I decided to consider the poor sound as an artifact of the example, just as Neil's visual absence from his tape was an artifact of his example. Despite the poor visual quality of the tape, all observers reviewed the tape as often as they felt necessary in order to describe it. Therefore, they had the opportunity to obtain whatever information they felt was necessary.

Secondly, I would suggest that when there are no obvious shifts or changes in a video-taped example of therapy (observers generally agreed that there were none in this case), observers tend to look for things to comment on. When they look for things, they become more involved in their own referential patterns and therefore their descriptions are divergent. In some cases, they present their fictionalized inferences of the clients' cognitive processes, or describe what they would have done instead.

I would suggest that in order for these observers to converge in their descriptions about the events in therapy, a certain level of process needs to be presented. I am unable to describe this level exactly, but it seems related to evident change. I realize this sounds like a circular description, but it applies. This is something like the process of crystallization in a super-saturated solution. Once the saturation reaches a certain point, the crystallization begins.

In the descriptions of therapy, there appears to be no form, until there is a form to describe, and we only know there is a form to describe when the form is described convergently by observers. Perhaps at the conclusion of this paper I will be able to make some comments about the identifying features of therapy session examples which indicate that a set of observers might converge. Von Foerster's discussion of eigen-values may be relevant.

To get back to the example at hand, where we are at the point of considering the level of explanation in the descriptions of Gisela's session, there are certain necessary prefatory remarks which follow naturally from the comments on the behavioral descriptions of this session. The major comment is that the explanations vary widely. It is useful to examine them, because they reveal rather clearly the extent of the differences between the observer's referential patterns. In a sense, this session was treated like a projective assessment device. I will present some exemplary explanations together with some comments, rather than a thorough discussion of this level in this session. I will present this discussion by observer, one at a time, rather than attempting to compare one observer with another. There are insufficient behavioral similarities here to use a focus for comparing explanations across observers.

In Gary's explanations of Gisela's session his basic referential pattern involves the comparison of Gisela's session with Gary's thoughts about structural therapy. On several occasions, he described what Gisela did from a structural perspective, and then he suggested what she should have done, or what he would have done. He suggested that Gisela talked with the clients instead of having them talk to each other. He explained that he would have asked the husband to give the kleenex to his wife, or he would have let the wife get it herself, rather than handing it to her directly as Gisela did.

Gary analyzed some of the content from his understanding. For example, he said that the woman's statement, "I'm afraid of hurting my mother.", should have been separated by the therapist into the two statements, "I'm afraid.", and, "I don't want to hurt my mother."

At one point, Gary explicitly stated that what he saw in the session had more to do with what the therapist was not doing than with what the therapist was doing. Gary's entire structure of reference involved comparing the session with his own notions of therapy and therapeutic theory. We can see that Gary might have focused on specific behaviors and used them as metaphors for the

couple's normal pattern of relating, or he might have initiated an enactment between them.

Gary's referential structure is revealed here as authoritative, or perhaps judgmental. Clearly, when he sees therapy that is not especially notable, or effective, he advances his own notions. The referential stance is one of the instructor to the student. In the absence of a strong presentation he applies his own notions. He appears to have had little doubt about how he would have proceeded in this situation. Of course, numerous comments could be made about the nature of structural therapy, or gestalt therapy, or whatever techniques Gary would have applied. I will leave these comments for the reader to fill in.

Devon's explanations are more variable than Gary's. For example, at one time she said, "I doubt that there was any change other than that they had engaged the therapist.", and later she said, "Gisela provides a context for them to open up in. You could say this was a difference in behavior." Devon's opinion shifted slightly between these two statements. Perhaps this shift is clearer in the next example: first, "For me there is a quality of distance. (between Gisela and the client); and then later, "Another way of describing Gisela's behavior would be that she is quiet and steady and provides a context for them to open up in. This is an alternate description to my earlier statement that she seems distant." Devon made an attempt to reference Gisela's interactions with her clients with different patterns. In the first half of the first example, Devon was referring the events in Gisela's session with her own ideas that the client needs to exhibit certain behaviors before change can be said to have occurred. In the second half of both examples, Devon has shifted to a referential system in which the quality of relationship is important. The shift is not complete, and there are aspects of both referential systems in the examples before and after the shift.

I am not attempting to argue for the existence of discrete referential fields. I am suggesting that when Devon could not say something positive about what she had noticed at first, she shifted the way she noticed, what she was comparing with, and in doing this, she noticed something different. The point here that this act of shifting referential structures is clearly distinct from Gary's explanatory process of becoming more extensively involved in describing his own referential system.

The distinction between the referential processes of the two observers was not as clear as I have described. Devon actually became involved in a short description of how the events in Gisela's session did not provide her with the markers of change that she normally uses. She explained this by saying that expressions of affect, particularly when they occur as necessary releases, do not necessarily indicate change. She suggested that the relatively consistent verbal and behavioral expression of the couple suggested to her that nothing had changed for them. Clearly, she was referring to a referential system in which certain behavioral and verbal alterations are required before change can be said to exist.

Gisela's references were of an entirely different order than the previous two. Basically, Gisela was referring to a referential system which was in accordance with, and which explained and justified both her behaviors and those of her clients. Gisela explained that her apparent distance from the clients represented a deliberate attempt on her behalf to mirror the hesitancy of the clients to talk either with her or between themselves. Gisela was particularly aware of attempting to join with the husband who had sat quietly with his arms crossed, letting his wife do the talking, throughout the session. Gisela was aware that he was angry and did not want to be there. She did not want to force him to participate for fear of alienating him further.

Clearly, the referential structure which informed Gisela's observations, was largely constructed out of her experiences of having been in the session with those people. Gisela did not compare her actions with what she could have done, should have done, or might have done, because she had done what she had to do. Notice here that the referential structure of the observer who was also the therapist has a different character than the references of those who are only observers.

Of course, we could describe Gisela's work, or her theoretical perspective, and perhaps several comments should be made, but I think the important characteristic of Gisela's explanations is their different quality from the other explanations.

As far as Gisela's referential system is concerned, we can notice the importance of joining, the importance of getting a clear description of why the clients came for counselling at that particular time, the importance of assessing the network of relations involved in the problem, and the importance of

affective expression. Gisela actually made each of these statements, but in her own words.

I would like to point out here a comparison between Devon and Gisela. Notice that Gisela said that she selected this segment because in it she felt they were getting to the point that really mattered (they were extending the network of people involved in the problem to include her mother), and because this was the only only time the woman showed some emotion, by crying. Recall that Devon said that an affective release did not necessarily in itself indicate a change had occurred. Now Gisela's description is slightly different. Although Gisela did not directly suggest that the crying indicated a change, she did say that she selected this segment, in part, because the woman showed some emotion for the first time.

The difference between these two descriptions will require the utilization of the word 'threshold'. I would like to suggest that Gisela thought the woman's crying was sufficiently notable to warrant the selection of this segment for viewing by others. Devon on the other hand did not think that the crying was particularly notable. They were talking about the same event, but with slightly different references. Gisela was referring to the experience of having been in the session, and Devon was referring to her personal practical and theoretical ideas about what constitutes change. We do not have sufficient information to determine whether Devon and Gisela had similar references with regard to the constituents of change, but we do know that they assessed this one event differently. This difference could be described in terms of gradation. Devon graded the event as low in importance. Gisela graded it on the high side of moderately important, at least by my evaluation.

I would suggest that we can refer to this sort of graduated difference as a difference in threshold. However, in order to use the term threshold, I need to make some distinctions about it . I am suggesting that the determination of threshold depends on the characteristics of the scale; and the characteristics of the scale depend on the referential structure of the observer. In other words, two observers may seem to be describing and evaluating the importance of the same event, and they may evaluate the same event slightly differently, very differently, or similarly. We could say that their thresholds of observation are lower or higher. In the case described here, Gisela would be said to have a lower threshold of observation of affective expression. Thus, it took less

expression to demonstrate to her that something notable had occurred. Devon's threshold was higher - she was less sensitive to the expression. However, if we keep in mind the proviso I described earlier in this paragraph about the dependency of threshold on scale, and the dependency of scale on referential structure, then it becomes apparent, that Gisela and Devon may have been referring to different referential structures, and so the comparison of their assessments of the crying incident may actually have involved entirely different structures of reference.

(An alternative method for describing the different evaluation between Devon and Gisela about the meaning and importance of the woman crying in the session could be based on Bateson's ideas of difference, and the difference that makes a difference. If I understand these ideas correctly, Bateson is suggesting that the elemental unit of perception is a difference. This is similar to Von Glasersfeld's notion of comparison. For example, one might say, "It's warmer out now". This is a difference generated through a temporal reference. This statement would likely be made as part of a standard greeting in the hallway. The same statement, in a different context, e.g., among mountain climbers bivouacked during a cold snap, might constitute a difference that makes a difference. The advantage of this conceptualization is it inherently includes the referential system and context of the speaker. In other words, a difference that makes a difference can not be described except through describing the system which is involved. The concept of scale and threshold, on the other hand, are more easily objectified and reified as separate from the relevant participants. This alternative explanation warrants further attention.)

This may seem like splitting hairs, but I think that both the concepts and the actual events in this situation are worth considering. For example, suppose that Gisela believed that it was important for people in therapy to express pain through crying; and suppose that Devon felt that it was important for people to make changes as demonstrated by certain behaviors (among which crying was not one). While it would certainly be possible to say that Devon had a higher threshold for crying, this could bury the more relevant distinction that they were operating with different referential structures. On the other hand, if we had reason to think that they were following similar patterns of reference (perhaps we had discussed therapy with them before), and then we noticed that Devon described one event as being unimportant, and Gisela described the same

event as quite important, and if they behaved in a similar fashion on several occasions, then one might find it very useful to distinguish the threshold of observation of these therapists according to a particular referential system. I will return to this discussion of threshold later.

Let me return to the observers' explanatory descriptions of Gisela's session. Tim's basic opinion about Gisela's session was that the therapist was gathering information, and clarifying the nature of the involvement of other people in the family. He said that Gisela was listening past the woman's words to what she was really trying to say. He did not think there were any changes.

Tim's description provides a good instance of the use of the word 'same' in distinguishing therapeutic process. In this case, Tim said that he observed the woman maintaining the same emotional tone throughout the segment. Tim explained this to mean that the woman had not changed. He was inferring that change could not be ascertained in the absence of change in emotional tone. The strong implication of his suggestion was that change in emotional tone is an important constituent of change. Tim appeared to be utilizing a scale of threshold for assessing change, that was very similar to that used by Devon and Gisela. I said that if we decide that the referential structures of these observers are sufficiently similar, and if they are using the same scale, then one can compare their thresholds of observation. I can not say at this point whether Tim, Gisela, and Devon have similar referential systems, but it appears that they are using a similar scale. The scale could be entitled, Change, and the gradations would be markers of emotional expression. Evidently, Tim did not observe the woman crying, so his threshold for this behavior is higher than Devon's.

(It appears that each person's scale is calibrated uniquely. Our description of calibration depends on our reference to other calibrations. I don't think there is any way of creating an absolute reference for calibration, because in each instance of usage, there are two people involved, the observer and the observed, who would understand the absolute calibration according to their own referential systems. I suppose that at best, each person involved can try to clarify their standards for distinction of important processes.)

Tim also explained that, "If the guy did shift we don't know where he shifted from." He cited the behavioral observation that, "The guy speaks once or twice." This is a clear example of how an observation depends on a

reference to something else, whether in time, space, or in a personal system of inference. Tim's reference in this case was to the man's previous behavior. Tim was inferring that he assessed change on a scale of behavior. His scale was calibrated in such a way that his threshold of observation (or distinction) was set too high to register whatever differences there may have been in the man's behavior between the beginning and the end of the sequence. Therefore, Tim observed 'sameness', which on this scale, meant that no change had occurred.

Notice that Tim's threshold on this scale was different from Devon's. Devon observed, "I suppose the fact that the husband raised his voice at the end of the interview and said; "Well, I'm married to her and not her family", and had an angry voice tone was a difference in that when he was speaking initially he was pretty inaudible." I would suggest that we have sufficient reason to compare Devon's and Tim's thresholds. They appear to have been using the same scale (Change), and they both calibrated this scale with behavioral differences. Because their methods for calibrating this scale of change were similar, both Devon and Tim seemed to infer similar referential systems. In this case, one could say that Tim's threshold for distinction of behaviors, on the scale of change, was higher than Devon's.

Neil's referential system was of a different order than Tim's or Devon's, and therefore, one can not easily compare his threshold for distinction on any scales with those of Tim or Devon. In one respect, Neil demonstrated references which were similar to Gary's. Neil suggested, "I would have said, "I don't want you to tell me why your parents sent you here. Tell me what you want to happen for the three of us." Neil was similar to Gary because he referenced Gisela's interactions with his own imagined alternatives. One could describe this mode of reference as instructive.

Most of Neil's explanations of Gisela's session were generated through reference to his inferences about the clients cognitive processes. This statement is supported by a lexical consensus as well as by the textual analysis. Observers of Neil's session used more words in the 'cognitive' category (mean, know, idea, interest, understand, sense, define, alternative, think, assume, agree, conscious), more times than in descriptions of any other session.

Neil's system of reference is difficult to describe. He appeared to notice statements made by the clients which related in some imperceptible way to his

own ideas about what the client was thinking (either consciously or unconsciously). It is difficult to describe a pattern in Neil's observations or explanations. It was not clear what inferential system he was following in himself, nor was it clear what the pattern was in the behaviors he would notice or how he would explain them.

For example, he cited the behavior; 'Because the wife said, "I went to see my family doctor, and he said that I should tell my mother..."' He explained this by saying; "She is saying that what her doctor said is more important than what the therapist said. I think it's a very subtle way of telling the therapist that she is not powerful." Perhaps if one had the opportunity to hear more of Neil's explanations it would be possible to describe the pattern inferences about clients' cognitive activity. One observation here might be that it is unclear whether the observation was made before the inference, or whether it was the other way around. I say this only because the connection between the client's statement, and the explanation is so indirect that it is not clear to me that there is any connection; and if they are disconnected, they could have arrived in any sequence.

I have described earlier how Neil (and others), sometimes fictionalize internal or external monologue, or dialogue. This style of explanation further complicates the problem of description that was just described. For example, Neil reported; "She says, 'You be nice to my parents.' Mike says, 'Screw that.'" As Neil admitted himself, these word were not actually spoken. In a sense, Neil is confounding the explanation with the behavior. His explanation of the behavior is very similar, except that in the explanation, he also infers intention on behalf of the woman; "She wants Mike to go and apologize to her parents. This is the dynamic." In this case, the explanation is clearly tied up in the description of the behavior. I'm still uncertain how to describe Neil's inferences; he seems to organize them around notions of power ('I think it's a very subtle way of telling the therapist that she is not powerful.', 'She wants...', 'You be nice...'), but this is just a guess.

I could provide more examples of how Neil refers to his inferences of the clients' or therapists' cognitions; how in some cases he creates fictional verbalizations; and how he confounds confounds behavioral descriptions with his explanations and inferences, but the previous examples are representative and further discussion is unnecessary.

Tim's Session

Lexical Analysis

1. Words used by all observer to describe Tim's session and not used in all descriptions of any other session:

depressed, bus, try

2. Words used by all observers to describe Tim's session and which may have been used in all descriptions of other sessions:

look, say, think, want, not

3. Words used most often in descriptions of Tim's session:

think 54 , bus 51, know 41, say 39, depressed 33, not 32, boy 29, kid 24, talk 23, feel 19, little 18, answer 17, try 17, want 16, different 16, client 15, happen 14, look 14, nod 13, right 11, work 11, control 11,

4. Words used more often in descriptions of Tim's session than in other session descriptions:

accept, answer, bus, conscious, consensus, control, curious, difference, experience, feeling, follow, instruction, know, little, look, nod, obtain, pace, paraphrase, rapport, relax, set-up, solve, strategy, suggest, think, track, try, utilize, word,

5. Words commonly used, but used least often in descriptions of Tim's session:

central, direction, explore, position, process*, relation*

Words used only in descriptions of Tim's session:

Depress (33)	Confus() (7)	Image (6)
Induct (6)	Instruction (6)	Fish/hook (4)
Prescribe (4)	Anticipate (3)	Wrestle (3)
Internal (2)	Pact (2)	Strange (2)
Absorb (2)	Incidental (2)	Devil's pact (2)
Imagery (2)	Eyes	Blah
Bump	Potential	Comic
Compliant	Expert	Puzzled
Ideo-motor	Shitty	Tangent
Technique	Tools	Boycotting grapes
Monotonous	Sleep	Feeling blue
Little squint	Perplexed	Readiness
Conversational trance	De facto control	Positive-transference

The first glance at the lexis involved in the descriptions of Tim's session should begin with the words that were used only by all observers in descriptions of Tim's session. There were three: depressed, bus, try. These words distinguish the descriptions of this session from descriptions of other sessions, while simultaneously indicating a consensus among observers about this session. Although these words do not collocate in normal usage, they do collocate in this particular population's descriptions of Tim's session. These words appear similar to that pattern of words used by all observers only in descriptions of Devon's session (motivate, TV, continue, laugh). 'Motivate' and 'depressed' describe the general nature of the problem, 'bus', and 'TV', describe something of the specific context of the problem and the context of problem resolution. 'Try', 'continue', and 'laugh' describe an aspect of the therapeutic process. This parallel pattern between Devon and Tim is an indication of similarity between the sessions. Perhaps other similarities exist.

The pattern of words used by all observers in descriptions of Tim's session and perhaps also in all descriptions of some other sessions shows a very common spread, although it is partly different from Devon's (talk, think, client, "?", work, not). Tim's session's descriptions involved 'look' and 'want'. In this case, the word 'look' was often used by observers to describe how they looked at the client to determine how he was responding to Tim. On this particular video-tape, the visual image was fuzzy, and the client was at the extreme left of the screen. As a result, the observers had to look hard to see how he was behaving. The main comment on this should be that the observers felt it was very important to observe how the client was responding in Tim's session.

In Tim's session's descriptions, the observers used the word 'boy', or 'kid', more often than they used 'client'. The difference between this and Devon's session is interesting. This may relate to the much lower incidence of the words 'work' and 'therapist' in Tim's session's descriptions than in Devon's session's descriptions. Perhaps one could suggest that the observers were describing Tim's session less formally.

Notice that the observers spoke about relation and process much less in their descriptions of Tim's session than in any other. This clearly distinguishes their descriptions from those of Gary or Gisela. Similarly, the low use of 'central', and 'position' distinguish this session from Gary's or Gisela's. In

Tim's session's descriptions the observers spoke about many therapeutic techniques more often than they referred to these techniques in other sessions (instruction, follow, pace, paraphrase, rapport, relax, set-up, solve, strategy, suggest, track, utilize), and similarly, they used many words more often that commonly collocate with therapy (answer, conscious, consensus, control, difference, experience, feeling).

There is a peculiar contrast between the lack of formal professional lexical indicators (work, therapy, client) and the preponderance of lexical items relating to therapeutic technique. This contrast is paralleled in the conjunction of words that were used only to describe Tim's session. Notice the colloquial, popular, or metaphoric words (fish/hook, wrestle, shitty, puzzled, boycotting grapes, blah, feeling blue, comic, devil's pact, bump, bus, little squint, de facto control), and compare these with the technical lexis (depressed, prescribe, imagery, ideo-motor, anticipate, confuse, expert, internal, conversational trance, positive transference, technique).

This is a different pattern than the street language used in the description of Gary's session, or the opposing sets of words involved the language of conflicting relations used in the descriptions of Gisela's session. There is only one item that relates to conflict - 'wrestle'. However, there is a tension inherent in this lexical pattern that arises out of the strange association of words used by the observers. It appears that they described something that was at once technically therapeutic and commonly human. The peculiar effect of this contrast resists description. I would suggest that this contrast most closely relates to the peculiar tension that is central to humor, or comedy.

The descriptions of Tim's session illustrate how observers in a sense become that which they observe. Tim's session involved setting up an intervention, increasing anticipation, and finally delivering an instruction which most people perceived as comic. In the descriptions of this session (as in the descriptions of other sessions) the pattern of language used by the observers shifts and becomes like that which they are observing. Just as the observer participates in creating the event, the event participates in creating the observer.

There were several other notable aspects of lexis in the descriptions of Tim's session. The first of these was the significant set of 'internal (feeling) state' words (confused, depressed, feeling, experience, internal, conscious,

curious, anticipation, puzzled, perplexed, feeling blue, blah, absorb, relax, curious). The combined frequencies of these words comprised half the total frequency of internal state words in all 25 descriptions. Clearly the observers converged on the idea that Tim's session involved internal emotional experience.

Secondly, there was a significant set of items collocated with the nodal item 'hypnosis' (induct, confuse, imagery, relax, eyes, anticipate, pace, track, conversational trance, expert, ideo-motor, sleep, monotonous, utilize, conscious). Once again, the observers were clearly in consensus that this session involved some aspect of hypnosis. It is also notable that many of these words were used exclusively in descriptions of Tim's session.

To summarize this section on the lexis used in the descriptions of Tim's session it possible to make several statements. For one the descriptions of this session were distinguished from descriptions of other sessions through the pervasive incidence of the words 'bus', and 'depressed'. The word 'try' was also used consensually in descriptions of this session, though it was also used in other session's descriptions. There were three notable lexical sets. The internal (feeling) state set occurred substantially more frequently in descriptions of Tim's session than elsewhere. There was a substantial set of technical therapeutic terms. The set which collocated with the nodal item 'hypnosis' was much more substantial among these descriptions than in any others. One might also describe a peculiar juxtaposition of technical words with common colloquial terms, metaphors, and popular psychological language. The lexical tension created by this juxtaposition may parallel the incidence of humor which was described in Tim's session.

Textual Analysis

In general, there was not much verbatim consensus about the nature of the relationship in the session with Tim, but four of the observers seemed to be describing similar events. Gary said the relation was much like the relation between a comic and the audience. He said the main aspect of this relation was Tim's increasing the level of anticipation for the punchline. Gisela said something similar. She said that the major aspect of the relation was that Tim asked the boy if he would agree to do something different; and the boy agreed without knowing what he would be asked to do. Therefore his anticipation

increased throughout the session. Devon basically described the relation as a conversational trance induction which involved a lot of joining and pacing. Tim felt that the important aspect of the relation was that the boy was absorbed and focused on what he was saying. Neil's comment was different from the others'. He suggested that the main feature of the relation could be described as a young man consulting an older man, who was an expert, and whom he trusted. Neil said indirectly that there was a positive transference. These comments about relationships illustrate certain referential patterns which will be discussed later.

The observers demonstrated a high degree of consensus about the important processes in the session. The one process they all described was the way that Tim increased the boy's anticipation for the instruction on what he was to do differently. The other comments about change were mostly related to this process. All observers except Gisela described how Tim spoke with the boy about how his previous methods for resolving the problem had not worked. All observers said that Tim had asked the boy if he would be willing to try something different. All observers described how Tim paced the boy's experience of getting on the bus, and sitting down and thinking. All observers described how Tim asked the boy to make himself as depressed as possible. Devon, Gisela, and Tim described the boy's response to his instruction as one of puzzled or amused agreement. There were other aspects of the process that individual observers described.

The only other description of process which I will describe here was that the observers all suggested that Tim knew seemed to know where he was doing in this session - that he knew what he wanted to do with the client. These statements were closely connected with the use of the word 'set-up'.

As far as the question about change was concerned; Gary, Devon, and Tim said there was a change. Gary and Devon felt the change was indicated by the boy's laughter in response to Tim's suggestion that he make himself as depressed as possible. Tim said that the change came about earlier when he told the boy that he would give him something different to do, and the boy experienced curious anticipation (in place of depression) about what he would be told. Gisela said she would reserve judgement about whether there had been a change until the next session; and Neil said that he did not think there had been a change, only a demonstration of a technique Tim uses.

At the behavioral level of description, there was considerable consensus between observers about some behaviors. They all described how Tim had asked the boy if he would be willing to do something different, how the boy said yes, and how he made the boy wait before telling him what he could do. They all described how Tim paced the boy's experience of riding the bus. Everyone but Gisela described how Tim initially asked the boy about how he gets himself out of feeling blah (or blue).

There were some different behaviors described by some observers, and they all used slightly different words, but overall, there is more convergence on more specific behaviors in the descriptions of this session than there were in the descriptions of any other session. Notice that his is the case even though this session involved more 'internal (feeling) state' words than any other session. Perhaps this session involved the presentation of more clear explicit behaviors than other sessions. Perhaps, this session demonstrated a style of therapy which the observers were more knowledgeable about, and about which they shared similar knowledge. Whatever the reason, there is evidence that the observers were using similar scales in their descriptions of this session, because they were describing similar behaviors. Whether or not they were operating with similar referential systems is another question, and one that will be considered next.

At the level of explanation one finds that there were actually considerable differences between the observers. For example, Gary's explanations were basically the following three: one, Tim set up the intervention intentionally to create anticipation in much the same way that a comic does - so this aspect of timing and anticipation was crucial; two, the boy chuckled, or laughed at Tim had given the instruction, and this indicated that he had shifted, because anytime someone laughs in therapy, something important has happened for that person; and three, Tim was making the implicit aspects of the boy's ways of making himself depressed, explicit, and this prevents him from continuing to do the same thing.

Gary's references were: one, through metaphor to the popular tradition of stand-up comedy; two, to his own belief that laughter in therapy is significant (which is also based on the reference of laughter to the temporally previous non-existence of laughter); and three, to his own belief or theoretical stance in gestalt theory, particularly about the value of insight (which also depends on his

inference that the boy had become conscious of a significant pattern of his behavior that had previously been hidden).

Devon's explanations were largely metaphorical. She explained the session through the metaphor of a therapist going fishing, getting a bite, keeping it on the line, and finally catching it. Within this metaphor, her explicit explanations were mostly in reference to conversational trance induction. In this referential system the most important scale for noticing and assessing behaviors was a measurement of the behavioral consensuality between the therapist and the client - the higher the consensuality the higher the success of the interaction. For example she explained that the only way that Tim could successfully make such a patently absurd suggestion as he did was if he had "good rapport", and a "good consensual reality", with the client, which she determined that he had because of the way the boy was nodding in agreement, and finally chuckling in response to Tim's instruction.

There were many other very similar examples. For example, she said, "I was watching the head nods as Tim was talking about getting on the bus,... to see if he was getting that non-verbal affirmation, that what he was saying was on track.... and he was getting that head nodding." Devon's referential system was clearly relational, or interactional. She noticed the client's behaviors in reference to the therapist's behaviors and the therapist's behaviors in reference to the client's behaviors. (i.e.., "Tim seemed to be sensitive to the feedback he was getting from the client. For example, when Tim asked, "How do you get out of feeling blah?", and then came back with, "Or maybe you don't.", obviously he was reading something off the client that suggested that maybe he didn't know how he got himself out.")

I would suggest that the explanations Devon provided illustrate fairly clearly how an observer is typically operating with a fairly complex multi-levelled referential system. In an analysis such as the one being conducted here it is really only possible to illustrate how observers might agree about behaviors and concepts, and yet explain those concepts differently. To illustrate the notion of referential systems I have typically described how one, or maybe two referential systems might be operative in an observer at one time. However a more precise analysis would probably reveal many such overlapping systems in each observer. For example, Devon clearly demonstrated a belief in a particular theoretical approach to therapy - perhaps

naturalistic hypnotherapy. At the same time she demonstrated a metaphoric reference to fishing, which in the context of our discussion, was a reference to a playful game of hunter and hunted - so there was a strong reference to play - that is to say that she notices events in reference to play. She also demonstrated a referential system structured on subtle behavioral changes. She would be inclined to notice certain behavioral changes that others, who do not have the same referential system, would not. There are also a variety of generic referential operations such as difference in time, difference in space, which are operative in everyone, but in different scales and with different thresholds. Perhaps the generic referential systems of time and space operate as part of the operation of all the other referential systems.

To get back to the previous discussion, Gisela seemed to offer several explanations that were similar to Devon's. Her references were also through what I would call naturalistic hypnosis. There were slight variations between Gisela's explanations and Devon's. For example, Gisela explained that Tim was inducing trance because we, the observers, seemed to be falling asleep while we were watching, and she seemed to distinguish some events in a subtly different way from Devon, but it would be difficult to describe these differences.

I would suggest that Devon and Gisela were operating through some very similar referential systems. This observation makes it possible to compare her response to the question about whether there had been a change, to Devon's response. Gisela said she would have to wait until next session to see if there had been a change for the client. Devon said that there definitely had been a change which was indicated by: the change in the boy's voice from "slow and with a blah tone [at the beginning] .... to speaking more quickly and laughing, after he was ordered to be depressed." In this case, Devon demonstrated a lower threshold for behavioral change than Gisela did.

Tim's explanations seemed to illustrate, once again, that the referential system of the observer who was also the therapist, were different from those of the observers who were not the therapist in the session being observed. Tim gave many of the same kinds of explanations that Devon and Gisela provided, especially regarding the 'rapport' or 'consensual agreement' between himself and the boy, as demonstrated by the boy's focused absorption and his own adjustment of his own behaviors to maintain that absorption. However, Tim

also referred extensively to his own inferences about the boy's self-imaging processes; and the boy's internal cognitive processes. He explained some doubts he had about whether or not his questioning of the boy about how he got himself out of feeling blah had been properly handled. He explained two reframes (he said the boy was a 'great' thinker, and that the bus ride was important); and he explained the self-control which he felt the boy had gained through being asked to stop being depressed when he got off the bus.

Clearly, the references which only Tim used were not so purely technical as the references that both he and others made to hypnosis. For example, he described at length his inferences about how the boy was caught in a hall of mirrors - watching himself watching himself. I'm not sure what to say about this at this time, but I think that the topic of the observer who is also the therapist, bears further consideration.

Neil's explanations were different from the others. He briefly explained how Tim built rapport, got a yes response, increased anticipation, paced the bus riding experience and delivered a paradoxical intervention. However, a substantial portion of his comments were about two other topics. These two other topics, had also been substantially discussed by Tim. Neil was concerned that Tim had not handled his question to the boy about how he got himself out of feeling depressed, properly. He said that when Tim did not get an immediate response, he became uncomfortable with the silence, and broke it, by saying, "Or maybe you don't." Neil suggested that this "let the boy off the hook", and deprived Tim of the opportunity to "reinforce" the methods the boy was already using. Neil said that Tim should have waited and made the boy come up with his own response.

Tim's statement about this point was slightly, but importantly different. Tim said that his mistake was in saying, "Or maybe you don't." Tim had not intended to get the boy's description of how he got himself out of feeling blah. He had hoped the boy would say that he did not have very good methods. He said he had made a mistake in saying, "Or maybe you don't", because this statement seemed to suggest that he thought the boy was incapable.

It is clear that Tim and Neil were making similar statements about the same event, and yet they had different referential systems, so they were actually observing different events. Neil was observing an opportunity to elicit a positive statement from a person who had been talking negatively, and he

thought that if the positive response had been elicited (which would have required the therapist to endure the discomfort of silence while the boy struggled with a difficult question), then the therapist could have reinforced it with approval and positive verbal statements. Tim, on the other hand, saw this event as a slightly bungled attempt to have the boy admit that his methods for resolving the problem were not working. This, of course, would have given Tim a perfect opportunity to ask him if he would be willing to do something different. As it was, Tim had to terminate that little interchange, and then summarize himself the methods the boy had been using that were not working.

I would suggest that Neil's observations were generated through reference to a system of theory or therapeutic practice, in which the client is encouraged to make difficult personal decisions, to achieve higher levels of conscious understanding; and in which the therapist works as a gentle, but persistent provocateur. Tim referred to the sort of strategic therapy that has been created at the Mental Research Institute.

The final point I would like to make in regard to Neil's comments was about his explanation of the aspect of control which he felt that the boy had gained by being told that he could stop being depressed when he got off the bus. Curiously, Tim and Neil seemed to be following very similar referential patterns in their explanations of this aspect of the session. It is interesting that they could be so equivalent about the observation and explanation of 'control' and yet seem to be so different in the previous example. Perhaps this occurrence exemplifies how observers have multi-leveled referential systems; so that some levels can overlap across observers, while others do not.

Neil's Session

Lexical Analysis

1. Words used in all descriptions of Neil's session but not used in all descriptions of any other session:

(there were no words in this category)

2. Words used in all descriptions of Neil's sessions that may also have been used in all descriptions of other sessions:

client, feeling, know, mean, right, say, think, want

3. Words commonly used to describe other sessions but used most often in the descriptions of Neil's session:

cognitive, close, conclusion, concrete, construct, cues, define, difficult, direct, directive, enthusiasm, expect, focus, idea, influences, intent, interest, intervention, knew, know, look, mean, notice, raise, reason, reinforce, reject, remember, responsible, subtle, understand, kindly,

4. Words commonly used to describe other sessions but used least often on descriptions of Neil's session:

aware, begin, continue, develop, important*, join, kid, relabel, pace, pattern, sequence.

5. Words most commonly used in descriptions of Neil's session:

think 42, know 41, say 38, not 35, want 28, client 19, fact 18, information 15, "?" 15, mean 15, therapist 14, look 14, alternative 14, answer 13, talk 13, change 11, focus 11, try 11, right 11, direct 10, response 10,

6. Words used only in descriptions of Neil's session:

Sisters (16)	Alternative (14)	Perfect (8)
Vulnerable (6)	Hypothesis (5)	Elements (4)
Perspective (4)	Blame(3)	Men (2)
Deeper (2)	Imperfect (2)	Disown
Clarification	Self-esteem	Admit
Father	Incest	Personal
Profound	Brakes	Backtrack
Bouncing	Defending	Comprehension
Discern	Envy	Self-exploration
Idealistic	Inadequacy	Influence
Provocative	Intense	Isomorphic
Long-term	Realistic	Reorientation
Weakness	General curiosity	Self-deprecatory
Railroad train	Missing information	Kindly father
Anecdotal fascination	Cognitive comprehension	

In the descriptions of Neil's session, there was no consensus of lexical items which distinguished these descriptions from the composite descriptions of other sessions. This lack of a lexical set which was exclusively used only in all descriptions of Neil's session, distinguishes these descriptions from the composite descriptions of other sessions, because in all other composite descriptions there was an exclusive pervasive lexical set. This means that

there was not a consensus about anything distinctive in this session, whereas there was somethings distinctive about each of the other sessions.

There was a substantial set of items which were used in all descriptions of Neil's session, and also in all descriptions of some other sessions. One could suggest that although Neil's session did not seem to have any unique identifying features, it did fit a basic standard pattern of lexical descriptions.

There were two notable differences in the standard categories of lexis employed by all observers between the descriptions of Neil's session and the descriptions of other sessions. For one, the descriptions of Neil's session included the highest frequency of words in the 'cognitions' category (mean, idea, interest, understand, sense, define, alternative); and the lowest frequency of words in the 'behaviors' category. These frequencies indicate the general lexical consensus about these descriptions in comparison with other descriptions. Clearly the observers consensually distinguished more cognitions than behaviors in Neil's session.

There were several words which were not included in the category of 'cognitions', but which were words that occurred more frequently in descriptions of Neil's session than elsewhere, and which collocate closely with cognition (clarification, cognitive, comprehension, conclusion, cues, define, discern, hypothesis, information, knew, profound, remember, reason, self-exploration). The existence of this set provides evidence to support the argument that the observers consensually distinguished a substantially greater number of events related to cognition in Neil's session than elsewhere.

The low frequency of 'behavior' words found in descriptions of this session was paralleled by the lower incidence of words which collocate (in the language of therapy) with behavior (pace, pattern, join, sequence).

The word 'important' was was not used at all in the descriptions of Neil's session, but it was used between three and twelve times in other sessions' descriptions.

The descriptions of Neil's session included the second lowest frequency of words in the category 'professional action'. (respond, directive, frame, intervention, reinforce, work). The frequencies of occurrence of these words were very similar in descriptions of Gisela's and Neil's sessions; and both these were substantially lower than the frequencies of 'behavior' category words in other session's descriptions. The 'professional action' words which

occurred in descriptions of Neil's session do not suggest any sets of words which collocate with a particular theoretical orientation.

In the list of words which occurred only in descriptions of Neil's session, there was a substantial set of words which could be entitled 'inferred descriptions of personality' (self-esteem, defending, envy, admit, self-exploration, idealistic, inadequacy, intense, provocative, weakness, curiosity, self-deprecatory, realistic, blame, disown, personal, vulnerable, profound).

There are many other observations about the lexis used in the descriptions of Neil's session that could be discussed, but I think the major aspects that I noticed have been presented. Here is a summary. The observers of Neil's session did not consensually distinguish this session by using words which were not used pervasively in other composite descriptions. They did employ the basic standard pattern of words found in other sessions. The observers distinguished fewer behaviors in this session than in most others; and they distinguished substantially more 'cognition' words than in any other session. This session was consensually distinguished from other sessions by the exclusive incidence of a large set of items entitled 'inferred personality descriptions'; and by the non-incidence of the word 'important'.

Textual Analysis

Relationship: Three observers (Devon, Tim, and Neil) described the relationship in similar terms. Devon said that Neil was asking questions and trying to bring the client into his world-view. Tim said that Neil seemed to have a partially defined idea of the problem, and he was asking questions to complete his definition. Neil said he was asking questions that were designed to make the girl reach her own conclusions, but that it seemed he knew the kinds of answers he wanted, and it seemed that the girl may have been giving him the answers that she knew he wanted.

Gary and Gisela offered differing descriptions of the relationship. Gary said that Neil seemed distant from the girl, in the way he was sitting, and that maybe this physical distance was his way of joining with the girl's need for space. Gisela said that Neil seemed to have a good working relationship with the girl, because he knew a lot about her and her family, and she seemed fairly open in talking with him.

Two observers (Devon and Gisela) said that this session was difficult for them to describe because Neil was not visible. All they could see was his foot. They said that it was difficult to assess the relation on the basis of only audio information from the therapist. Devon argue that therapy is interactive, and depends as much on the therapist as the client. Tim suggested that this session (like Gisela's), was hard for him to describe, because he could not understand what the therapist was trying to do.

Process: Three observers (Gary, Devon, and Gisela) basically described the process in this session in similar words. Tim's and Neil's descriptions of the process were similar in theme, but were expressed in different words.

Gary characterized the process as, "...gathering information and challenging some of her constructions." Devon described the process as a , "challenge of the client's beliefs and assumptions about who she is and what she wants .... at a cognitive level." Gisela called it, "entertaining alternate perspectives about herself, her family, and her relations - in a cognitive way."

Tim said, "It's all just a set-up for an intervention. ... He's focusing on how she feels about herself, how other people see her, and what she makes out of that.....It's designed to elicit information." Neil described the process in this way, "I am asking her for clarification. My intent is to get her to think deeper, to have some insight, to reach her own conclusions, rather than me to give her my understanding of what I think."

Gary, Tim, and Neil mentioned the aspect of gathering information or seeking clarification. Gary, Devon, and Gisela mentioned the idea of directing the woman to look for alternatives, and this idea seems to be implied in Neil's statement as well. Gary and Neil pointed out the idea of challenging her thoughts.

Change: Three observers (Gary, Devon, Gisela) described basically the same change with similar words. Tim's statement was thematically similar to these three, but it was expressed in different words. Neil's comment about change was dissimilar from the previous four.

Gary said, "There's a very subtle, tiny little shift .... she's shifting away from blaming (her sisters) to a softer reason why." Devon said, "I haven't seen anything that would indicate that [there had been a shift] .... except possibly her cognitive understanding that her sisters might have had something to contribute to the problem." Gisela said, "I didn't see much change in this segment. She

stayed pretty much the same. .... other than that, without much prompting she said that maybe here sisters weren't as perfect as they seemed."

Tim said, "I would not say there was a change or shift there, because as far as I could see, there was no intervention, except for the inward-focusing, self-exploration part."

Neil said, "I believe there was a change. She came in believing that she was not as adequate and worthy as her siblings. By the end of the segment, she was beginning to talk as though they had some failings, and weaknesses just as she did. I see the change as she becoming more realistic about herself vis-a-vis the members of her family."

To summarize these comments, perhaps one could say that the observers were basically convergent in their descriptions of some aspects of this session. There were other aspects, which have not been mentioned, which demonstrated divergence. Notice that, with the exception of Gisela, the observers described the relationship in terms that were very similar to the terms they used to describe the process. Only Devon's and Gary's comments pertained to the interactional aspect of the relation. Gary mentioned distance, and joining; and Devon mentioned that there was insufficient information to describe the interaction properly The major variations from consensus in the comments that have been described here appear to have been Tim's suggestion that the process was still in the 'pre-therapeutic' or information gathering phase; which was contrasted with Neil's statement that the process was at least minimally successful in helping the woman change.

Behavioral: I will summarize the individual observers' behavioral descriptions first and then comment on them.

Gary described behaviors which had to do with Neil's physical distance from the client; the way he used his voice as a brake to stop her because when she started talking she was like a railroad train; the way he questioned her persistently to obtain alternatives and how he agreed with her when she responded correctly; and how the client could be said to have change if she puts herself in the other person's shoes in her future relations.

Devon described behaviors such as: Neil's questioning the woman about what failings her sisters might have, and how he affirmed her when she got the right answers; the information that was missing because Neil was not visible; and how she (Devon) had not seen a change because she had not

seen the woman behave any differently i.e., hand gestures, or how she described.

Gisela observed that: Neil knew a lot about the client and she was willing to entertain his questions; Neil asked the woman what sacrifices she would have to make to be like her sisters, and whether she wanted to be like them; Neil asked her about 'the other side' of the coin regarding her sisters - whether they were as perfect as they seemed; the woman stayed the same throughout the session.

Tim saw these behaviors: Neil asked her, "Why don't your sisters trust you?", and she said, "Maybe they're not as perfect as I thought."; he ends the session with, "Well, that's interesting."; and he seems to say, "Well that's interesting. What else?"

Neil observed that: "He [Neil] was saying, "Yeah, uhuhn, that's right. I think so. You've got the right idea. You're on the right track.""; her voice was softly pitched, especially compared to his more digging voice, and that her voice was invariant throughout the session; one could only see the feet of the therapist; he would not let her off the hook until she came up with the right answer.

Summary: There was no one single behavior which all observers described, or which seemed to be crucial to what was happening in the session. The non-existence of a singular, or consensually distinguished event makes this session similar to Gisela's; and this seems to be associated with the non-occurrence of an exclusive consensual lexical set. In simple terms, one might suggest that the observers reported a non-descript session - they reported nothing about this session that was especially remarkable or unique.

It would be possible to discuss the differences between the observers' behavioral descriptions, but I think the major aspect of this level of the discussion is that when there is no singular behavior which is identified by all observers, the observers tend to describe a variety of slightly different events. This was also true in the descriptions of Gisela's sessions.

Perhaps the other aspect which should be described here is something about the way that observers tend to identify themselves as individuals with distinct referential systems when they observe sessions in which they do not describe the same behaviors. Again, this phenomenon was apparent in observers descriptions of Gisela's session.

For example: Gary noticed the way Neil used his voice to interrupt the woman's monologue. This fits as part of Gary's view that the therapist should use himself as a tool for directing the interactional process in counselling. Gary suggested this in his description of Gisela as well, when he said that Gisela should have given the kleenex to the husband to give to his wife. Gary also described Neil's questioning as challenging, and he described in some detail how the challenging was conducted. Recall that the lexis in the descriptions of Gary's session indicated some antagonism and opposition.

Devon noticed how the therapist was not visible, and how this prevented her from talking about the relation, and how therapy is a relational process. Devon's own session was described in relational terms.

I could describe many examples of how each individual observer's referential system as an observer, and as a therapist, is substantially revealed in their descriptions of Neil's session. One might argue that referential systems are apparent in all descriptions, whether behavioral, explanatory, conceptual, or whether about sessions in which a consensually distinguished event occurred or not. Of course, this is true, I am simply suggesting that referential systems are more easily visible, when observers describe a session in which nothing consensually distinguishable happens.

It is true that all observers described one behavior, in slightly varying ways, which was Neil's questioning of his client about whether her sisters were as good or enviable as she seemed to think. However the slight differences in how they described this behavior are important, and indicate major differences in their patterns of observing behaviors. Gary described a challenging process, which as I have said, is consistent with Gary's referential system. Devon described how the woman generated alternate hypotheses, which was consistent with what she observed; which was that the woman did not change, but only shifted her "cognitive comprehension". One can see here the important difference between the word 'challenge' (which is a valid therapist manoeuver within the frame of reference from which the word was spoken), and the words 'alternate hypothesis' (which is an invalid client change within the referential system which generated the words).

The topic of individual observational styles is not the current focus of this discussion. This topic will be considered at length in the next section of this paper. I simply wanted to demonstrate at this time that although there seems to

be some basic convergence of description of Neil's session, a closer investigation reveals considerable divergence. Although it would be easy to bury these differences, I think it is more useful to indicate that the differences exist. By indicating the differences, it becomes possible to notice the unique referential systems of observers. We will return to the discussion of the differences between observers' descriptions of Neil's session later.

Explanations: At the explanational level of the discussion it is difficult to compare explanations that pertain to differing behaviors. Perhaps a brief illustration of what can be found in the comparison of explanations will be sufficient at this time.

One interesting comparison is the difference between Neil's and Devon's explanation of the fact that only his feet were visible on the video-tape. About this, Neil said: "It was indicative of what the therapist was trying to do: to focus on the client; trying to get something from the client; wanting people to focus on the client's process; trying to get the client to pay attention to her process." Devon said, "Therapy has as much to do with the therapist as it does with the client. It's getting increasingly difficult for me to operate with all the focus on the client. Therapy has as much to do with the directions therapists chose to go in, as it does with anything that's innate to the client."

I would suggest that this comparison reveals substantially different referential systems. These systems are almost spelled out in the explanations. Neil was 'focusing' on the internal process of the client. The word 'focus' implies an observer who is looking at something, and trying to see it clearly. The implication of this is that there is something to be seen clearly. The notion of focusing does not include any implication that the observer is involved in bringing forth that which is being observed. On the contrary, the act of focusing is an authoritarian pre-emptive manoeuver in which the observer who is focusing pre-empts all other possible observational perspectives and imposes the one perspective (which is not really a perspective from the position of the one observing, because for this person, no other perspectives exist, and therefore, from the perspective of this focused person, there are no perspectives - there is only that which is being 'focused on').

When this sort of focusing occurs, a peculiar paradox of reference results. In simple terms, what happens is that when the observer does not include himself as part of the interactive process of bringing forth that which is

said to be observed, the object he is observing becomes what he is himself. It's a funny thing that the way to keep the observer apart from what is being observed, is by including the observer. This is a difficult concept to explain. Perhaps it is clearer in the example Neil has so kindly provided.

In the example Neil has provided, all the observers suggested, in some form, that he had an idea of what he wanted the client to think. All the observers, with the exception of Neil, also suggested that minimal if any change resulted. Neil felt he had been successful in leading the ~~woman to~~ think differently. The other observers said that she may or may not have thought differently by the end of the session. They said they could not determine that because they had insufficient behavioral evidence of change. They also said that even if she had altered her cognitions, that probably did not constitute a significant, or even notable change.

I would suggest that the consensus of observers indicated that Neil was confounding his thoughts with those of the client's. And he had no way of determining which was which. Neil tends to be cognitively oriented, and that is why there were so many words in the descriptions which fit the cognition category. In effect, Neil observed what he was thinking.

Devon's referential system was quite different, and the differences can be described both through her general pattern of reference as revealed through her descriptions of others' sessions, and through the descriptions that other observers made about her session. In simple terms, I would suggest that because Devon was able to observe how her behaviors related to the behaviors of her client, and because she was able to make the corresponding adjustments on the basis of her observations, she was able to actually 'focus' more clearly on what was happening for her client, rather than confounding her own processes with her client's.

Perhaps it would be helpful to look more specifically in this example at the form of the references. There is an important difference between Neil's and Devon's referential patterns and I think the mechanism of how difference was generated should be described.

In making the comparison between Neil and Devon, I am not suggesting that the difference exists only between these two observers, or even that these observers operate exclusively through one system of reference or the other. On the contrary, the reason I am explaining this comparison at some length is

because it exemplifies two referential styles which seemed to be used by all observers at some time. The style which was exemplified by Neil in this case was one that was common for observers who were also the therapists. Devon's style was one that Neil also seemed to use. For example, Neil was the only observer who said, "I could be isomorphic to a lot of relationships she's had with men, in which she tries to give them what they want. If that's what was happening, then the therapeutic process that I thought was therapeutic may not have been." In other words, I am not trying to argue that the styles of reference which were illustrated above were exclusively characteristic of individual therapists. Instead, I was trying to illustrate two extremely different styles. At the same time, I would suggest it is probably true that certain referential systems are more characteristic of some observers and therapists than others.

Neil's observations were based on comparisons of thought processes within the client. He explained, "He was looking for very specific answers and insights. When he got them he reinforced her by agreeing." Two aspects of his reference need to be mentioned here. For one, an insight was defined as one which he agreed with. Therefore, one can see that he was comparing his ideas about her initial insights, with the insights which he intended her to have. Secondly, both the initial insights, and the intended insights were Neil's inferences. His inferences were revealed in his choice of words. For example, he said that initially the woman was 'idealistic' about her sisters, and by the end, she was more 'realistic'. Both these words are inferential. Neil was comparing what he observed about the girl, with his own unstated assumptions. I would suggest that his pattern of assumptions were at least partly organized around notions that there is a 'real' world, and there are individual ways of perceiving the world - which can be accurate (realistic) or inaccurate (idealistic).

The referential system which Devon illustrated involved the comparison of behaviors (rather than inferred personality descriptions). For example, when she was explaining why she did not think Neil's client had changed, she said, "It wasn't like a shift that said, "Wow! I've got it. I never looked at it that way before!" There wasn't that reorientation." Tim said much the same thing, "It is not like Gary's example where the guy says, "Yeah! Alright! I got it!" In both cases, Devon and Tim were observing by comparing Neil's session with their own ideas about the constituents of change. The difference between their

observations and Neil's was that they compared behaviors, whereas Neil compared inferences.

In general, in the explanations provided by the observers, Devon and Tim demonstrated significantly different referential systems. Gary's system was more similar to Neil's, but not the same. Gary explained his observations in reference to his ideas about challenging, and the therapist's use of self as a tool to regulate the patterns of interaction. Gisela explained much of the interaction in reference to her ideas about information gathering. Both Gary and Gisela showed less tendency than Neil to make inferences about the woman's personality.

Concepts: Many aspects of the observers' conceptual descriptions have already been presented. Perhaps a brief review will show some of the different conceptual patterns which the observers used to organize their descriptions.

Gary's concepts were made of statements like: "I think it's hard for her to make contact with him."; "She is very protective and guarded"; "He is gathering information and challenging some of her constructions."; "She would keep on talking, like a railroad train, then he hit the brakes by using his voice, and she became more attentive."; "There is a very subtle tiny little shift, but how long will it last?" The second comment is inferential. The first and fourth comments describe interactional patterns. The third comment is a description of Neil's technique; and the last comment summarizes Gary's construction of change.

Devon's conceptual comments included: "He is systematically introducing some doubt into her world-view. He is attempting to bring her more into his world-view."; "I really wanted to see him. Not seeing him was like half the relationship was missing."; "Neil is more the kindly father."; "The overall process would be described as a challenge of the client's beliefs and assumptions about who she is and what she wants."; "There was nothing I could discern from watching her that showed she made more than just a cognitive shift." Perhaps the most interesting conceptual statement here is Devon's metaphoric description of Neil as a kindly father. This statement summarizes most of Devon's explanations and behavioral descriptions.

Gisela conceptual comments included: "It's very hard to comment on the relationship, because you couldn't see Neil."; "They have a good working relationship."; "I think Neil was trying to help her put her feelings of envy about her sisters into perspective."; "I call it entertaining alternate perspectives."

Notice that at the conceptual level, Gisela and Devon were similar, although they used different words. One can see that they both conceptualize Neil as a advisor - someone who has a more balanced, appropriate perspective of the girl's life, and who is helping the girl to see and accept some of his perspective.

Tim's conceptual comments included: "I find it's hard to say anything about that."; "He's just asking questions."; "The therapist has a semi-definition of the problem and is working to obtain more information so that he can define that problem more clearly for himself and frame it more clearly for the client. [Finally] he might say, "It really sounds like ...."; "It's all just a set-up for an intervention."; "I suppose it could be an intervention, but if it was one, it wasn't very effective." Tim's concepts clearly reveal how he organized his explanations and descriptions within the perspective of a therapist who seeks to get a clear definition of the problem, and then provide a clear intervention. One could call this a strategic therapy approach.

Neil's conceptual statements included: "I seemed to be in control of the relation."; "The therapist knew what he wanted from her."; "I was looking for this lady to see her sisters not as entirely good and she as entirely bad."; "The therapist was trying to focus on the client."; "I had to ask myself if she's giving me the answer that she thinks I want, or is she coming up with the answer that she really believes is true for her." Notice that in three comments Neil was describing the therapist in the session as if he was someone else. Once again, we can see the attempt to create objectivity through imagining that he was not present in the session.

Summary: In the textual analysis, the majority of the observers basically described the relation as Neil asking questions. The majority of observers said the process involved the therapist challenging his clients assumptions, or suggesting alternate cognitive perspectives. Most observers said there was no change.

At the behavioral level of description there was little convergence, except that most observers described Neil asking questions, and providing affirmative responses when he got the answers he wanted. At the explanatory level, observers clearly presented and discussed their own systems of reference for explaining therapy. Although individuals shared some aspects of their referential systems, there were two very different methods for explaining presented by Devon and Neil. Devon observed by comparing behaviors, and

Neil observed by comparing his inferences about personality. At the conceptual level, Gary spoke in structural theory words about the therapist's use of self as a tool in therapeutic interactions. Devon suggested the metaphor of the 'kindly father' which seemed to fit Gisela's concepts as well. Tim's concepts clearly originated in strategic therapy. Neil's concepts showed him attempting to objectify himself, and clarified his view of his intentions in the session.

F Analysis of the individual observers

Introduction: Many of the characteristics of the individual observers have already been described. In this section I will attempt to summarize the lexical distinctions which characterized individual observers, and I will summarize some of the textually based statements made about individual observers in the previous section. It will be necessary to make some comparisons across observers as the discussion proceeds.

Gary

Lexical Analysis

1. Words that Gary used in all descriptions:

know, little, want, say, suggest, talk, think, same, shift, not

2. Words used by Gary more frequently than by other observers:

acknowledge, alternate, attend, aware, confuse, consensus, digging, evidence, image, information, join, relabel, language, listen, little, mature, mirror, motionless, paradox, process*, provide, raise, response, sacrifice, sense, suggest*, talk*, tissue, utilize, word,

3. Words used less frequently by Gary than by other observers:

answer, curious, depressed, explanation, idea, job, seem, speak, suppose

4. Words most frequently used by Gary:

Think 45, Little 44 , Know 42, Say 40, Not 36, Mother 32, Want 31, Information 22, Suggest 21, "?" 20, Motivate 18, Sense 18, Process 16, Paradox 16, Change 16, Therapist 15, Respond 15, Bus 13, Work 13, Direct 12

5. Words used only by Gary:

Grow (10)	Energy (10)	Game (8)
Create (7)	Explicit (7)	Metaphor (6)
Central (6)	Implicit (6)	Embedded (5)
Boundary (4)	Fuel (2)	Probe(ing) (4)
Construct(3)	Dyad (3)	Rigid (2)
Available(2)	Goal (2)	Hypnosis (2)
Personality (2)	Stuck (2)	Imagery (2)
Style	Essential	Balance
Kleenex	Anchored	Comic
Fuck you	Shitty	Cutting the groove (4)
Gas tank	Restructuring	Railroad train
Brakes	Hierarchy (2)	Decentralize (2)
Young and dumb	Boycotting grapes	Sandwiching
Piggybacking	Double-bind	Gestalt (5)

I will indicate first the most obvious identifying features of the lexis that Gary used in his descriptions.

In the category of 'primary distinctions', Gary used the words 'process', and 'shift' more often than the other observers, and was not distinguished through his use of other words in that category. He was the highest user, overall, of words in this category.

In the category, 'modes of distinction', the only distinguishing feature of Gary's lexis was that he used the word 'same' more often than the other observers.

In the 'qualities' sub-category of 'aspects of distinction' Gary was only distinguished by his frequent use of the word 'little'. Under 'quantities', Gary was only distinguished through being the sole user of 'central'.

In the 'cognitions' category, Gary used substantially more cognition words than any of the other observers (193, 150, 119, 154, 169). He was notable for more frequent or exclusive use of know, information, paradox, aware, confused, explicit, and implicit.

Gary and Tim were notable for being the most frequent users of words in the 'sensory perception' sub-category (58, 36, 33, 58, 43). Among these, Gary used the word 'sense' more than others, and was the only user of the word 'energy' (10).

Gary was the most frequent user of words in the 'verbal expression' sub-category (159, 79, 47, 76, 129), particularly, the word, 'talk'.

Gary was a mid-range frequency user of 'behavior', and 'internal state' sub-category words.

Gary was distinguished by being the most frequent user of 'professional action' words.

Notice that in the list of words Gary used in descriptions of all sessions, Gary was notable for being the only observer to use the words 'suggest', 'shift', and 'same' in all descriptions. clearly, Gary is distinguished from the observers by his habitual pattern of noticing suggestions, shifts, and sameness.

Gary's lexical pattern of description is heavily weighted with words from the categories 'cognitions', 'professional action', 'verbal expression'; - more so than the lexical patterns of the other observers. Within these three general categories, one can notice certain sub-categories, and these have to do with three theoretical orientations to therapy. These three include, in respective order of frequency of use: structural, strategic-hypnosis, and gestalt.

The structural set includes: shift, join, relabel, mature, direct, grow(up), central, boundary, dyad, probe, balance, restructuring, hierarchy, groove, decentralize. The strategic-hypnosis category includes: confuse, relabel, mirror, paradox, utilize, anchored, language, suggest, metaphor, embedded, hypnosis, imagery, double-bind. The gestalt set includes: gestalt, energy, rigid, motionless, implicit, explicit, acknowledge, digging.

One can identify a general set of semi-technical, theoretically amorphous words: stuck, sacrifice, game, process, change, motivate, respond, and aware. There is also a small set of words which collocate with constructivism: construct, consensus, and perhaps, create.

It seems that Gary emphasizes the distinction of cognitions, verbal expressions, and professional actions. Within these categories there are significantly large sets of words which pertain to the theory of therapy, especially, structuralism, strategic - hypnotherapeutic, and gestalt. .Gary's language was distinguished from the language of other observers by the higher frequency of words in these sets. Gary was the most frequent user of 'process', and it is clear that he described process in theoretical terms which belong to the theories mentioned.

I would suggest that his use of the word 'same' to describe all sessions relates to his use of 'cutting the groove'. Gary distinguished repetitions. For him, in many cases, a repeated event was one worth noticing. His referential

system involves the idea that therapeutic interventions need to be repeated several times. Therefore, he noticed when one event was the same as another in reference to his theoretical beliefs. One might also suggest that the use of 'same' is referentially associated with theories of gestalt and strategic therapy, particularly with the words, 'stuck', and 'pattern'.

The distinguishing pervasive use of 'suggest' in all Gary's descriptions relates to his distinction of events with words from the theory of hypnosis. Similarly, his use of 'shift' relates to his use of structural and perhaps strategic terms.

Probably the most characteristic feature of Gary's distinctions was his use of technical, conceptual, theoretical words. Secondly, he talked a lot about talking. If one puts the two together, it's possible to suggest that Gary liked to talk, and he liked to talk about theory.

There is one other aspect of Gary's language that is not as fully apparent in the lists I have provided as it probably should be. He often used colloquially derived expressions and metaphors. Because he used these infrequently, I did not count all of them. However there is a sampling here: shitty, fuck you, young and dumb, mommy, kid, boycotting grapes, gas tank and fuel, railroad train and brakes, sandwiching, piggybacking. Notice that the first five words, or word groups, are connected by having potentially offensive meanings, and indeed, they were deliberately used in context to provoke a reaction partly because of their offensive meanings.

Textual Analysis

I would like to make a few comments based on a textual interpretation of how Gary distinguished relationship, process and change. More will be said about this later when the observers' styles are compared. Probably the major point to make here is one that is closely connected the predominant theoretical, cognitive, conceptual, and verbal lexis in Gary's language. I noticed that Gary telescoped, or conflated concepts.

For instance, notice the rapidity with which theoretical concepts were presented in the following passage:

> I start with *positive relabelling* in a *relational focus* - the kid's behavior as being *protective*. My goal is *to get the kid out of being the problem* and instead *focus* on the two of them - the *relational* aspect. I'm *unbalancing the dyad* of mother and son, and *joining* with the son - in a *positive way*,

> with statements like; "You've been a good son, you've been trying to help your mother, you've been trying to help her out." I am also *mirroring* his *body language*, and *pacing* him physically.

The apparent density of conceptual language in this passage was exaggerated by my editing of the original transcript, and by the fact that this was Gary's description of his own session. He was more familiar with what he wanted to say about it, so his description was more condensed. My editing deleted superfluous conversational filler, but even before editing, Gary's presentation was more conceptually condensed than the others. The only other description which was close to this was Devon's description of her own session. Gary's descriptions were not all as dense as this, but he did frequently connect several concepts in one sentence or short passage.

When Gary connected concepts so tightly, many theoretical statements were made without explication or behavioral references. It was generally true that Gary operated linguistically more frequently at the conceptual level, with fewer and briefer operations at the explanatory or behavioral levels, than the other observers.

From my perspective, as I tried to analyze the behaviors and explanations that observers were using, Gary's observations were more difficult to work with. While I knew of, and have frequently used almost all the expressions he was using, when I tried to compare the behaviors that he was referring to, with the behaviors that others were referring to, sometimes I literally could not distinguish what behaviors he was talking about. Similarly, when I looked for the explanations of his concepts, they were often not there.

Part of the reason for the situation I have just described could be that Gary assumed that I was operating with the same referential system as he was. However, I do not think that this was the case. In fact, Gary explained, at length, some of the theoretical terms he was using, which indicated to me that he thought he needed to explain his concepts to me. These explanations were made at a theoretical level which was disconnected from the session we had observed. The following passage from Gary's description of Devon's session illustrates this:

> I think of when I used to work with Judith Brown, a gestalt therapist who, when I first read the book Change about fifteen years ago, and I used to watch her work a lot, and I would see that she did all of these

> things that were in the book in a quite different way, but still, I think in Change they talk about exaggerating something, which for me is making the implicit explicit, and I would see that through exaggeration something would shift in the individual and there would be some change.

This passage has been edited, but I did not reconstruct it any further, because I thought the overlapping of ideas was integral to the concepts that Gary was expressing.

I am describing Gary's observations in this way to introduce the notion that one useful method for describing how therapists construct therapeutic process, is by distinguishing their patterns of travel between levels of description (behavioral, explanatory, conceptual). Some observers move quickly between levels; some reside more often at a particular level; others typically leave a level unused. Of course, this method for describing observer-therapists' constructions depends initially on the describer's ability to distinguish levels. I have provided some examples, and I should say that from my experience doing this, it is not a simple task. Sometimes, concept and explanation are difficult to segregate. Perhaps this eventuality indicates that some observers conceptualize in explanations. Perhaps it means that the categories I have suggested need more development.

There are two more aspects of this method for describing observers' constructions which I will introduce here. Firstly, observer's methods for constructing their descriptions tended to mirror, or be mirrored by, their styles of doing therapy (from the perspectives of the other observers). For instance, Devon provided the following description of Gary's session:

> He's introducing too many different ideas. First, there's the reframing. The boy is helping his mom by giving her a job looking after him. That's one step. Within the same five minute segment he started suggesting, not only are you doing that, but you should be putting your 'mommy' out of her job. Then he suggests moving her out of the 'mommy' job and into being a mother - giving her a pink slip and a new position.
>
> If I were using a similar kind of reframe ploy, I might have paced it slower. I might have extended that whole process over a much longer time, so that they had a chance to actually experience that difference between interviews.

In this passage, Devon was describing Gary's session through reference to what she would have done differently. She was indicating that Gary's

therapeutic manoeuvers were too closely linked. This description is very similar to my descriptions of Gary's descriptions of other therapists' sessions. Gisela also suggested that another therapist might have let the mother and boy go home just with the initial reframe. Neither Tim nor Neil said anything about the number of techniques used in this session. My point here is that there are isomorphisms apparent in the methods observers use to construct their descriptions of therapy, and the methods the same observers use for doing therapy. It is not essential that all the observers make this statement explicitly in order for this statement to be made.

A second, connected concept, is that the constructions of the observers' descriptions tended to mirror the construction of the therapy they were observing. In this case, Devon's description of Gary's session, was congested with conceptual statements and did not contain explanations, or behavioral references - with the exception of her explanation of her own referential system. Even her own explanation is a condensation of many interconnected concepts, explanations, and behaviors.

When observers described the sessions they partly revealed their unique individual styles of construction, and they partly revealed the style of construction of the therapeutic process they were watching. I have indicated earlier, that when there was little consensuality about the behavioral level in the session, observers tended to clearly manifest their own styles of construction. The opposite also seems to have been true, expressly; when there was a relatively high consensus about behavioral events in the session (as in Gary's session), the constructions of the observers' descriptions tended to be similar to the constructions of the sessions they had observed.

Devon

Lexical Analysis

1. Words used by Devon in all descriptions:

change, difference, not, say, saw, think, voice, want

2. Words most frequently used by Devon:

think 35, not 29, direct 25, change 24, kid 23, know 22, say 22, behavior 20, seem 17, relation 17, client 16, posture 15, voice 15, fact 13, mother 13, begin 12, boy 12, process 12, work 12

3. Words used more frequently by Devon than by other observers:

alternate, behavior, challenge*, change*, contrast, cues, curious, difference, direction, engage, establish, pace, fact, induct, kid, nod, pattern, relation,* saw*, seem*, solve, speak, suppose, tone, voice,

4. Words used less frequently by Devon than by other observers:

"?"*, conscious, happen*, intervention*, look, right*, same, wrong,

5. Words used only by Devon:

World-view(6)	Fish/hook (4)	Inaudible
Belief (2)	Tone (2)	Minimal cues (2)
Reject(2)	Rate (2)	Risk (2)
Ability	Father	Potential
React	Adjust	Bugged
Comprehension	Differentiation	Discern
Ploy	Reorientation	Revelation
Skin Color	Soften	Status
Kindly father	Self-deprecatory	Entering her reality
Discover	Closet soaper	Liveliness
Missing information	Conversational trance	cognitive comprehension

Perhaps the first aspect to notice about Devon's lexis, was that she was the only person to use the words 'change', and, 'voice', in all descriptions, and Devon and Gisela were the only two observers who used the word 'difference' in all descriptions. She was the most frequent user of all three words, especially the word 'difference', which she used more than twice as often as the next most frequent user, Gisela.

Secondly, Devon was the most frequent user of words in the 'behavior' category (behave(iour), posture, nod, follow, interact). The word she used most frequently in this category was behave, or behavior. She also used 'posture', and 'nod' more frequently than other observers.

Devon was the least frequent user of words in the 'internal (feeling) state' category - words such as depressed, embarrassed, curious, feeling, and experience, although she was the most frequent user of 'curious'.

Devon was by far the most frequent user of the words, 'seem', 'relation', 'saw', and, 'pattern'. She was a frequent and exclusive user of the words 'suppose', and 'world-view'.

In the category, 'modes of distinction', Devon used 'begin' and 'difference' more frequently than the other observers, and was the only observer who used 'contrast'.

Devon's lexis is notably lacking in technical or theoretical terms. One could generate a set that collocates (in theoretical language), with 'hypnosis' (conversational trance, induct, pace, reorientation, entering her reality, minimal cues, adjust, skin color, world-view); and there is a vocal-auditory set that could be connected with that (inaudible, tone, rate, soften, voice, say, speak).

There seems to be a set of words which could be described as categories of behavior. They could also be 'internal state' words. (reject, react, ploy, discover, adjust, differentiation, reorientation, comprehension, relation, soften, challenge, revelation, bugged, discern, risk). Perhaps these are best described as words which link several behaviors into one descriptive category. Some of the words are nominal, and others adjectival, but they all function adjectivally in the sense that the describe behaviors. These words can be distinguished from words such as embarrassed, or depressed, which are clearly descriptors of inferred internal states.

To summarize these descriptions of Devon's lexical usage, one can say that she was distinguished from the other observers by her more frequent use of words in the 'behavior' category. This distinction was more sharply marked by a category of words which could be described as 'categories of behavior'. The latter category was highlighted by the word 'relation' which occurred substantially more frequently in Devon's descriptions that in all other descriptions. Devon's lexis was also the distinguished by the most frequent occurrence, and use in all descriptions, of the words, 'difference', 'change', and 'voice'. Her descriptions were distinguished by the most frequent use of 'seem', and 'suppose'. Although she did not use much obviously technical language, the technical language which did exist, seemed predominantly collocated with hypnotherapy, particularly with descriptions of voice and minimal cues.

Textual analysis

The comments on the textual analysis of Devon's descriptions are brief. The most notable aspect of Devon's construction of her observations was that her comments were equally divided between the conceptual, explanatory, and behavioral levels. Devon's comments were the easiest for me to analyze. (this

probably indicates that my referential system is more similar to Devon's than to the other observers') Devon seemed to have a habit a stating a concept, then an explanation, and then the behavioral reference. These levels did not always occur in this order, but they were easily discernable. Occasionally, she would also weave the levels of description into an overarching metaphor, as is apparent in the following instance:

> - How would you describe the change?
>
> I think the change in the young man's behavior was from the first part, when Tim was talking about him feeling blah, and then Tim started talking about how he gets out of it, and at that point the boy's voice rate was still slow to moderate and had kind of a blah tone in it. By the end of the sequence, the kid was laughing, and he was speaking more quickly. But a lot of that was Tim speaking so, a lot of what I noticed had to do with the kid's head nodding, affirming, saying, "Sure I'll do something different, anything, of course". All he said was "Sure", not knowing that he would be caught like a little fish on a hook. But he laughed at the end, and I would see that as an indication that there had been an internal state change.
>
> - Can you describe that internal state change?
>
> I can only guess at that. The reason I wanted to see it twice was to see if I could see the boy's face, but the picture wasn't clear enough to see the features of his face. So I don't have those minimal cues. All I could go on was the head nods. I saw that he was in agreement as Tim was talking him through getting on the bus and doing all this nonsense of being real depressed. You saw him nodding. And then being even more depressed so that even your parents wouldn't recognize you or something. Then he laughed, and I can only guess that there was a change. He was now laughing when he was being ordered to be depressed, in contrast to the initial segment when he was talking about being really stuck, and blah. How the kid sounded at that time was quite different.

This example is also a good illustration of how Devon preferred to describe behaviors rather than internal states. The actual number of words used to describe the concepts and explanations in this passage was much less than the number of words used to describe the behaviors. While the distribution of Devon's statements were not always so weighted at the behavioral level, it was true that most of her comments about change were proportioned similarly to the passage above.

Gisela

Lexical Analysis

1. Words used by Gisela in all descriptions:

close, difference, know, not, say, think, want

2. Words most frequently used by Gisela:

think 46, not 39, know 25, say 24, mother 18, "?" 18, look 14, feeling 14 , want 13, direct 13, motivate 12, problem 12, try 12, work 12, client 12, right 11, behavior 10, change, 10, family 10, information 9

3. Words used more frequently by Gisela than by other observers:

accept, close, distant, emotion, enthusiasm, experience, express, family, imperfect, interpret, look, perfect, perception, perspective, pushed, realize, reason, reflect, strange,

4. Words used less frequently by Gisela than by other observers:

begin, continue, focus, kid, good, lead, little, pace, sense, talk, therapist,

5. Words used only by Gisela:

Perspective (4)	Tension (2)	Bump
Guilt	Stress	Antagonistic
Compliant	Consultant	Envy
Expanding	Imperfect	Puzzled
Rubbed into	Struggles	Tangent
Torn	Unthreatening	Weakness
Transformed	Questionnaire	Monotonous
No ultimate place	Falling asleep	Verbally abused
Obsessed		

Gisela was distinguished from the other observers through being the only observer to use the word 'close' in all her descriptions. Notice also that she used the complementary term 'distant' more often than other observers. There may be a connection between her use of this complementary pair and her more frequent use of another complementary pair, 'perfect', and 'imperfect'.

Among the categories of the standard lexical sets employed by observers, Gisela was the least frequent user of words in the 'cognitions' category. In this category, she was the second most frequent user of the word

'think' and 'mean'. Gisela also used the least variety of words in the 'cognitions' category.

Gisela was also the least frequent user of words in the 'verbal expression' category. She was the least frequent user of the words 'talk', and 'voice'.

Gisela and Neil were the least frequent users of words in the 'primary distinction' category. Within this category she was among two of the least frequent users of the words 'happen', and 'relation'.

In the category 'personal identities', Gisela used the least variety of personal identifiers, and her overall frequency of use of words in this category was lowest. She was the highest user of the word 'family'; and she did not use the word 'therapist' at all.

One can distinguish several lexical sets among the words listed above. There is a small 'visual' set (look, perception, perspective, reflect), and a small, 'rational' set (reason, realize). Both these sets are composed entirely of words that Gisela used more often than other observers.

There is a large set of inferred personality descriptors (envy, weakness, guilt, compliant, antagonistic, tension, transformed, stress, obsessed, verbally abused, enthusiasm, motivate, experience, torn), and overlapping this is a set of emotions (envy, emotion, feeling, guilt). There is also a small set of categories of behaviors (pushed, unthreatening, puzzled rubbed into, struggles, reflect).

Notice that Gisela was one of the two lowest users of words in the 'professional action' category; and that the set of technical of theoretical words that she used did not identify a particular theoretical orientation to therapy (direct, motivate, work, intervention, relabel, support, interpret, reflect, consultant).

There seems to be a set of words which can be identified as complementary, or as having polarized meanings. This set was introduced earlier, and it can be expanded (stress - falling asleep, compliant-antagonistic, tension-monotonous, perfect-imperfect, close-distant). There is also a disproportionately large set of words with negative connotation (guilt, compliant, rubbed into, torn, obsessed, tension, stress, imperfect, struggles, falling asleep, bump, antagonistic, envy, weakness, verbally abused). This list is composed entirely of words that were used exclusively by Gisela, so they

identify her unique lexis. On the other hand there is a relatively small set of words with overtly positive connotations (perspective, expanding, transformed, unthreatening).

In summary, Gisela's lexis was distinguished from the lexis of other observers by: the lowest incidence of words in the 'cognitions', 'verbal expressions', and 'personal identities' categories; her use of the word 'close' in all descriptions; the infrequent use of technical expressions, and the absence of a theoretical orientation; the existence of a large set of inferred personality descriptors; a set of complementary or polarized pairs of words; and a disproportionately large set of negatively connoted words within her unique lexis.

Textual Analysis

The text of Gisela's observations was easy to read, but more difficult to analyze. Gisela tended to describe at the level of explanation; and so it was sometimes difficult to segregate the concepts and the behaviors. Compounding this problem (which would not be a problem for the casual reader), was the absence of explicitly technical or theoretical language. The concepts that Gisela did use were often inferred personality descriptions, and sometimes it was difficult to understand what she meant by these words.

In fairness, I should say that Gisela's unique lexis did represent a variety of positively connoted words which were used in the text of her descriptions, but which were not apparent in the list above because they were words that were also used occasionally by other observers. For example, Gisela used words such as, joke, acceptance, positive, comfortable, and gently. This analysis is probably faulty in that it emphasizes the unique aspects of the observers descriptions.

One thing the lexical analysis did accurately represent, I think, was Gisela's predominant use of popular lexical items. She described therapeutic process in ordinary language, which distinguished her descriptions very clearly from Gary's.

Gisela's referential system appeared to be constructed around explanations - both her explanations and the clients'. By this I mean that many of her descriptions pertained to the explanatory processes of the clients. For example, on the topic of relationship in Gary's session, she said:

Not supported so much. I think he was trying to support his reframing. I think he was not getting enough clear evidence that the mother had bought it right away as well. The boy gave the positive feedback, but the mother didn't quite.

- Had she bought it by the end do you think?

I think she was on her way to buy part of it.

- Are you saying that the mom was still expressing some hesitancy about what Gary was doing with her?

Yes. In the end he did this thing with the example from the past about calling for the child. When she heard this story she agreed with whatever Gary was doing. Whether that was consciously about keeping him dumb or not, I don't know. The mother nodded and said, "Yes, I had a car that made a call", but I don't think that's what he was leading to. But it didn't matter, at least they had achieved that understanding, and she felt good about it, and validated for her struggles raising this kid.

This passage indicates many aspects of Gisela's references, but the aspect I am referring to here has to do with the mother's acceptance of Gary through the process of hearing his story, accepting it as a validation of her, and then moving into a state of agreement with, or acceptance of, Gary. All this was based on a mutual understanding - and understanding as it is being described here, is a process of self-explanation. The mother explained the story to herself in a certain way, so she understood it, and this understanding meant she understood Gary and could accept him too.

Perhaps the reasoning in the last example was tenuous, so let me give another example that is clearer. In this example, Gisela is explaining why she thinks the boy in Gary's session changed during the session. Notice that the explanation of change in this example is constructed with a referential system in which change is said to exist when a behavior occurs for the client in the (inferred) absence of an explanation:

The boy nodded and said 'yes, yes, yes', to what Gary said, and then, when Gary asked him to do something he did it willingly.

- Do these behaviors indicate the success of the reframe?

It was not only that he did something willingly that he was asked, but that what he did followed directly from from what he was asked. This supported that Gary was right. Then Gary asked him, "Well, if she is doing that to you, how would you like to be treated? Tell her." And he did right off. So it was nothing that he could have made up that quickly.

Gisela is suggesting that because the boy did not "make up", which I interpret to mean 'cognitively devise', his response to Gary, his response was a valid demonstration of change. In this case, Gisela inferred that the boy did not have time to explain to himself what Gary had said, and he did not have time to 'figure out' a response. The absence of this 'figuring out' indicated to Gisela the validity of the change. Notice that 'absence of figuring out' is just as much an inference as would be an observation of the presence of figuring out.

Gisela's referential system determined that she compared her inferences of the existence (or non-existence) of self-explanation (making-up, figuring out). Here is another example in which Gisela explained why she felt that Devon had been successful in helping her client change:

> The realization is there for the client without having it rubbed into her, or without having it interpreted to her. Just following through the steps of asking her what she does when she is doing nothing makes it clear to her in a very nice and unthreatening way that she is doing something very positively. This shows her that she knows how to motivate herself in one area, and she can probably do it in another area .... You could just hear the realization click in her mind as she is breaking out into laughter.

In this example, there is a peculiar conjunction of several levels of self-explanation or non-explanation. The first statement in the passage, is that the client realizes something without coercion. The next sentence suggests that the process which lead to this (clear) realization involved explaining to the woman that she was doing something positively. Her realization apparently implied to her, or coincided with the 'knowledge' that she was motivated in other aspects of her life. The last sentence illustrates Gisela's metaphoric description ('click' - as in clicking channels) of the change event for the client. The change event in this description was not mediated by explanation. Change, for Gisela, was an event that occurred without the mediation of change. Before the change the woman explained herself to herself one way, and after the change, she explained herself to herself in a different way; but during the change there was no explanation.

The fundamental role of explanation in Gisela's referential system can also be observed in her description of her own therapy session. For instance, she described her own session this way:

It was the only time that she cried and showed some emotion, which expressed her stress. I think there was more tension in this part than before. I could see that on her part, which meant that it was very important to her. I try to stay on track and figure out the details of the problem, including him. I think he makes two significant statements in there; saying that he is married to Tina and not her family, and that he doesn't like to get pushed around.

Here we can see that Gisela's explanation of her own therapeutic method involved 'figuring out' a network of relations. One can also see that figuring out involved inferring 'stress', 'tension', and 'importance'. I think this example shows something of the isomorphic connections between this observer's methods for constructing her descriptions of therapy, and how this observer constructs therapeutic process when she is the therapist.

Although Gisela assessed change by noticing the immediacy of the some clients' responses, she was also the observer who reported on two occasions that she would need to wait until the next session to determine if there had been a change. Even in her description of Devon's session, Gisela said that she had reason to expect that there would be a change, but the least she could say would be that the client could not go on saying to herself that she was unmotivated. Notice here, that the basic level of change is still described in terms of the client's explanation to herself. It is also clear that Gisela's constructions of her statements about change involved several methods, one of which compared inferred states of self-explanation over times, and the other which compared some unstated activities between one session and another.

Gisela's constructions of relationship were largely constructed out of references to 'closeness' and 'distance'. The method for assessing of closeness and distance were similar to her methods for assessing change. Basically, she compared the immediacy of the clients' responses to the therapists, across time. For instance, in her description of Tim's session, she reported that the client was closely attending to Tim at the beginning of the session, and that he was still agreeing with Tim at the end. These comparisons of attending behavior supported her position that the relationship was conducive to successful therapy.

Tim

Lexical analysis

1. Words used by Tim in all descriptions:

"?", know, mean, not, problem, say, think

2. Words most frequently used by Tim:

not 50, say 39, think, know 30, "?" 28, client 26, problem 23, frame 22, information 20, direct 20, intervention 19, focus 16, define 15, mean 15, kid 14, therapist 14, right 14, bus 14, suggest 13, change 12

3. Words used more frequently by Tim than by other observers:

bus, "?" character, clear, communicate, daughter, define*, definition*, elicit, focus, follow, frame, interact, intervention*, mean, party*, problem*, refined, wrong,

4. Words used less frequently by Tim than by other observers:

accept, agree*, behavior*, boy, connect, direct, laugh, mother, nod, positive, response, saw, sisters, suggest, track, voice, word,

5. Words used only by Tim:

Definition (6)	Obtain (5)	Elements (4)
Hobby (4)	Stage (2)	Map (3)
Bullfight (3)	De facto	Lost (3)
Refine(ment) (3)	Perplexed	Problem-solving (2)
Accurate (2)	Self-Esteem	Eyes
Personal	Profound	Soliciting
Furniture	Compliment	Dead duck
Drifts	Self-exploration	Disease
Inadequacy	Influences	Manoeuvre
Mini-segment	Tools	Ideo-motor
Thrust	Defending	Absorb
Internal search	Driver's seat	General curiosity
Anecdotal fascination	Over the edge	Positive expectation
Little squint	Readiness	Approval-disapproval

Tim's lexis was distinguished from the lexis of other observers by his use of the words 'mean' and 'problem' in his descriptions of all sessions. He also used the least number of words in all descriptions.

In the observers' standard lexical categories, Tim and Gary were the most frequent users of words in the 'sensory perception' category (sense, focus, look, listen, clear, seem, perspective, notice). Of these words, Tim used 'focus', and 'clear' more frequently than all other observers. In the category 'cognitions', Tim used 'problem', and 'define' far more frequently than other observers. His total frequencies of word use in other standard categories was not notable.

Among the set of words that Tim either used exclusively, or more frequently than other observers, there was a remarkable set of words that collocated (in the language of therapy) with 'problem-solving therapy' (clear, define, definition, elements, focus, frame, intervention, manoeuvre, problem-solving, refine). This set formed the major identifiable set of technical language. There was a smaller set collocated with hypnosis (absorb, ideo-motor, internal search, positive expectation). There was another, heterogeneous, set collocated with general therapeutic technique (communicate, self-esteem, self-exploration, interact).

There was a large group of words in Tim's unique lexis which can not really be organized into a collocational set, but which is identifiable through having little to do with therapy. This group of words is more extensive and diverse than that found in the lexis of any other observer. This group contained words like: hobby, bullfight, furniture, anecdotal fascination, little squint, tools, driver's seat, over the edge, dead duck, general curiosity, and de facto.

Tim's lexis was clearly dominated by the language of problem-solving therapy. The words suggested that his referential system was built around a theory which involves focusing on the problem, getting a clear definition, and maneuvering in therapy to present an intervention. It would also appear that Tim metaphorically uses a variety of common language words.

Textual analysis

The textual analysis of Tim's descriptions reveals to me some interesting correspondences between the way he punctuated his comments and the nature of the session he was describing. For example, in his description of Gisela's session, Tim referred infrequently to specific behaviors, and the concepts he spoke of had largely to do with aspects of problem definition, e.g., information gathering, focusing on the pattern of communication, beginning to

map it out. The explanations referred the conceptual statements to the non-specific (or non-existent) behavioral descriptions through reference to a problem-solving model.

When Tim describes Gary's session, his references to problem-solving are similar, but the pattern of conceptual, explanatory and behavioral descriptions is reversed. In his comments on Gary's session, Tim focused almost exclusively on one particular event, and this was an event that only one or two of the other observers even mentioned. In Gary's session, there was a lot of activity, and Tim focused mostly on one event. Notice that in his description of Gisela's session, Tim essentially focused on the absence of focus in the session. In Gary's session, where there was a lot happening, he selected a particular focus. This focus was Gary's discussion with the boy about how he could have a party once his mommy became a mother. In his descriptions of this component, Tim described many particular behaviors, and balanced these with explanations and concepts.

I could provide other examples of how the patterns of behavior, explanation, and concepts shifted in Tim's descriptions according to the sessions he was describing, but I would like to move here to a discussion of how the particular form of expression within each of these levels shifted according to the sessions he was describing. For example, when Tim was describing Devon's and Gary's sessions, he frequently spoke in a more overtly metaphoric way than when he was describing Gisela's or Neil's sessions. This has to do with Tim's style of expression. Recall that in the lexical analysis, we saw that Tim's lexis included a large number of varied non-technical words. Many of these words were used in a metaphoric way in Tim's descriptions of sessions which he felt were productive according to his problem-solving referential system.

For example, Tim spoke of a "flip" in Devon's session, which he explained as the client becoming more "animated" while talking about the "sacrifices" she had to make to watch TV, and then he said, "And then Devon throws it on her lap". He also conceptualized the process in Devon's session as being "like a bullfight, it's the moment of truth, and if you miss with that sword, you're a dead duck". Part of his explanation of this was, "That's what the whole dance up to that point is for".

Compare these metaphoric descriptions with some examples of his descriptions of Neil's session: concept - "The therapist has a semi-definition of the problem and is working to obtain more information"; explanation - "He is directing his questions towards self-esteem and self-concept"; behavior - "She says, 'Maybe they don't trust me.' He says, 'Why don't they trust you? Why don't they want to get to know you more?' She says, 'I guess they're not as perfect as I thought.'" In Tim's description of Neil's session (and Gisela's) he demonstrates a literal, semi-technical style of expression.

In summarizing this brief textual analysis of Tim's descriptions, I would suggest that there was a peculiar conjunction of a problem-solving referential system, and a metaphoric style of expression. When Tim described problem-solving as going well his descriptions also included overt metaphors. In a parallel sense, when Tim thought problem-solving was progressing well he focused on particular moments which demonstrated this, whereas when he expressed that there was no particular focus, his descriptions covered a range of concepts related to the lack of focus, and often without behavioral referents.

Neil

Lexical analysis

1. Words used by Neil in all descriptions:

"?", answer, feeling, good, know, right, say, sense, therapist, think, want

2. Words most frequently used by Neil:

think 58, say 57, not 54, want 44, boy 43, mother 38, know 32, client 26, try 25, answer 23, happen 23, problem 19, "?" 16, feeling 16, good 15, right 15, sense 15, agree 13, fact 12

3. Words used more frequently by Neil than by other observers:

agree*, angry, answer*, awful, believe, boy*, client*, conscious, control, depressed, enjoy, expect, feeling, fun, good, happen*, idea*, important*, incest, interest, job, laugh, mother, not*, positive, punctuate, right, say, therapist, think*, try*, want*,

4. Words used less frequently by Neil than by other observers:

change*, difference*, direction, emotion, experience, family, information*, mean, position, shift

5. Words used only by Neil:

Reinforce (10)	Apologize (9)	Embarrassed (6)
Conclusion (4)	Power (4)	Clarification
Humor (3)	Convince (3)	Men (2)
Cooperate (2)	Deeper (2)	Grinning
Disown	Backtrack	Incest
Bouncing	Expert	Admit
Forcefully	Idealistic	Provocative
Intense	Isomorphic	Lighter
Long-term	Non-response	Realistic
Sabotaging	Sincerely	Technique
Waffling	Positive transference	Slip and slide
Ownership	A real ass	Feeling blue

Neil evidently used many of the words in this analysis of lexis, more frequently than the other observers. He was notable for using more of the same words in his descriptions of all sessions. He used the words, 'feeling', 'good', 'sense', 'therapist' in all his descriptions, and no other observers used these words in all descriptions.

Neil was distinguished from other observers by his use of words in the 'primary distinction' category. In this category, he used the word 'happen' far more times than any other observer, and used none of the other words except 'relation'-six times, and 'change' once.

In the 'modes of distinction' category, Neil used the word 'not' far more often than the observers, and he used the word 'difference' least often.

In the 'cognitions' category, Neil was the most frequent user of the words 'think', and 'agree'. In the 'verbal expressions' category he was the most frequent user of the words 'say', and 'answer'.

Neil was the highest user, overall, of words in the 'internal (feeling) state', and, 'personal identities' categories. He was the highest user of the individual words, 'feeling', 'depressed', 'embarrassed', 'apologize', 'mother', 'therapist', 'client', and 'boy'.

Neil was the lowest user, overall, of words in the 'behaviors', and, 'professional action' categories.

Despite Neil's repetitive use of many words, and his high frequency of use of some words, there were few distinct sets of words in Neil's unique lexis, or in the lexis he employed more frequently than other observers. The largest set collocates with inferred personality descriptions (disown, angry, believe,

enjoy, interest, power, forcefully, intense, sabotaging, waffling, ownership, apologize, deeper, idealistic, sincerely, positive transference, embarrassed, lighter, realistic, feeling blue).

Notice that Neil was the most frequent user of 'control', and the only user of 'power', 'reinforce', 'forcefully', and 'intense'.

Neil was also the most frequent user of 'enjoy', 'laugh', 'fun', and the only user of, 'humor', 'grinning', and 'lighter'.

Neil frequently used words which could collocate with 'conversation' (agree, answer, conclusion, clarification, cooperate, convince, provocative, admit, non-response, say, interest).

The set of words which could collocate with technique or theory of therapy is small and heterogeneous (reinforce, sabotage, isomorphic, positive transference, technique, punctuate).

In summary, Neil's distinguishing lexis demonstrates a prevalence of inferred personality descriptors, personal identifiers, and words collocating with conversation, control, and enjoyment. It also demonstrates that Neil had a strong proclivity to talk about therapy in terms of what happened, instead of in terms of process, change, shifts, or difference; and that Neil did not frequently use words collocated with a particular theory of therapy.

Textual analysis

From my point of view, the most characteristic aspect of the conceptual, explanatory and behavioral levels in the text of Neil's descriptions, was a feature which was similarly characterized at each of the levels. This distinguishes my understanding of Neil's descriptions from the others'. The particular characteristic I am referring to was Neil's tendency to talk about inferred personality events or processes. In other words, he would talk about a different level of event than could actually be seen or heard to be occurring. From Neil's perspective this tendency would be described as an attempt to describe a "deeper level" of what is really "happening" for the client, or for the client and the therapist.

This characteristic could be observed in slightly different forms at each of the levels of text that I have punctuated, but these forms are not very different. For example, Neil conceptualized about Devon that, "The therapist is gently telling the client that she's just sabotaging herself". Notice that at the

explanatory level he alludes to the inferences he made at the conceptual level; "She's not telling the the client that. She's asking a question so the client can conclude that herself, consciously or unconsciously". At the behavioral level, Neil demonstrates his inferential processes by quoting fictional statements by the therapist. One could also say that he quoted what he imagined the therapist was really trying to say, but was not actually saying, to the client: "The therapist is quietly, helpfully, sincerely, ... telling the client, 'You're doing a fine job of not being motivated. You're working very hard at not being motivated'". As I mentioned before, I am not guessing that Neil was imagining these statements. When I questioned him while I was interpreting the transcripts, he said that such statement as these were not statements that had actually been made, but rather were statements which he felt reflected what was "really" being said at a deeper level.

In a sense, many, not all, but many of Neil's explanatory and behavioral descriptions were conceptual in the sense that they clearly demonstrated the inferential interpretations of Neil. One might say that Neil was attempting to listen to the inner conversation which was occurring in, and between the therapist and client. From my perspective, it is clear that the inner conversation he was listening to was the conversation going on inside himself. Thus, we saw a lexis which was distinguished by a large set of inferred personality description words; and a set of words collocated with conversation.

One apparently contradictory aspect of Neil's lexis, was his uniquely high use of the word 'happen'. Neil spoke as though he was talking about what was really happening. I would say there was some inherent tension between his attempt to describe what was 'happening' and his attempt to describe his internal conversation about what was 'really happening'. Perhaps some of this tension is connected with the set of words he used which collocated with power and control. He frequently described the dimension of control, power, or credibility which the therapist had in the session; and with the measure of control he felt the client demonstrated over his or her own life. I think Neil was also referring to how well he could organize or control events through his interpretations of them. This last statement is consistent with the descriptions which other observer-therapists provided about Neil as a therapist.

One more point may be relevant here. Notice that in my descriptions of Neil's descriptions of deeper levels of meaning, I have also shifted to

describing my inferences about Neil's internal processes. This is another example of structural coupling. The longer I interact with Neil's transcript, the more likely that it will be interpreted in a way that reflects what I understand about it. At the same time, the longer I interact with it, the more my descriptions will drift towards identity with Neil's text. In this sense, both the text and I change. I think this is an example of what Maturana refers to as structurally coupled unities co-drifting ontogenetically.

V DISCUSSION

A Introduction

The purpose of this section is to comment on the descriptions from a general theoretical perspective; and to discuss some of the implications of that which has been brought forth in this research.

There are many ways to discuss the descriptions of the sessions that I have provided. The particular form of presentation I have selected has been chosen because it fits the purposes of this investigation. This form serves some ends, and neglects others. Von Foerster suggests that;

> Every formalism allows a person to look ...[at the world] in his or her own way. Any time you look at it differently, you will get [something] different ... Depending on the formalism you construct, you will be able to account for certain phenomena. Looking at it with a different formalism allows you to account for different phenomena. Unfortunately, this is a somewhat unpopular position, since everyone would like to have his or her formalism account for everything" (p.115).

I would like to be careful in this discussion not to attempt to account for too much. This is an exploratory investigation which has been designed to look into the methods that observers, who are also therapists, use for constructing therapeutic process. The basic question in this research rests on a particular theoretical perspective, constructivism, and so the purpose of this discussion is to consider the descriptions of therapy from a constructivist perspective. The manner of presentation of the descriptions in the previous chapter, inherently indicates some domains of distinction for this discussion, and there are other domains, which have not yet been mentioned, and which will be introduced in this section.

I would like to remind the reader that the process of conducting this research has involved the progressive changes that have resulted from my interaction with the investigation. I started with some general ideas, and devised a general method for exploring those ideas. As the work progressed, those ideas changed, and consequently, the form of the research has also changed. I am saying this because I think it is integral to the process that has been followed, and the results which have been achieved. This

discussion of therapeutic process is a crystallized moment in the ongoing discussion of psychotherapeutic process. Part of the purpose of this research is to describe a process, and therefore, a description of the process becomes part of the concluding discussion.

As I have have been involved in this work, my ideas have shifted, so my perspective on the observers' descriptions has shifted. This makes it difficult to finally discuss the work and put a form to it. What form should I give? The form that I had intended to give when I started the work? The form that I barely see now? Or should I wait for next week's, or next year's perspective? All of these perspectives are different, and can not be combined, or averaged; nor can one form be held out to be the most correct. Fortunately, time imposes a constraint, and so I am forced to discuss those aspects which are apparent to me now.

B Session Descriptions

In the descriptions of the sessions in the last chapter, I attempted to indicate some of the similarities and differences among the patterns of lexis employed by observers, and among the textual constructions of observers' descriptions. I will begin here by reviewing and discussing some of the patterns of similarities and differences at each of these levels.

Limitations of lexical analysis

Firstly, the similarities which exist, exist through my construction. This is no small point. Secondly, as I have said before, one must exercise great caution when interpreting decontextualized lexis. Patterns of lexis by themselves suggest semantic patterns, and herein lies the danger; because semantics are not available through decontextualized lexis.

Wittgenstein, in *Philosophical Investigations*, has argued persuasively that words have meaning according to how they are used, who uses them, with whom, and in what situations. This argument about the context-specificity of "language games" means that there is very little that can be said about the semantics of the words that were analyzed in this study.

When words are taken out of context and grouped, new patterns of association become apparent in the mind of the reader. These patterns exist for the reader, they were not present in the speaker, or in the listener at the time they were spoken. Von Foerster talks about the need for caution in the

normal process of understanding: "Every statement, utterance or description is intrinsically ambiguous. ... We use the term 'misunderstanding' to explain our differences with other people. If we misunderstood each other things would be a lot easier. No. We *think* that we 'really' understand each other. That's the problem." This is the process which is involved when we have all the contextual referents at hand, and the situation is so much more precarious when we segregate specific referents, such as words.

The tendency to want to interpret patterns of meanings in therapists' (or clients') lexis is a hazard that has taken many researchers, particularly those psychodynamically oriented researchers of the school of the Content Analysis of Verbal Behavior (Gottschalk, Lolas & Viney, 1986). The interpretive possibilities are extended by the lack of context-specificity. The mode of interpretation exemplified by these psychodynamic investigators of lexis, is by their own description, similar to, but better than projective assessment. I would argue in favour of Maturana's position on this issue: "We cannot speak about the substratum in which our cognitive behavior is given, and about that of which we cannot speak, we must remain silent, as indicated by Wittgenstein" (Maturana, 1979; p.53).

Given the limitations of lexical analysis, it is possible to make some statements about the patterns of words that occurred in the descriptions of the individual sessions and across all sessions.

Non-technical lexis

One of the first aspects which should be discussed is the non-specific nature of the words which all observers used in their descriptions of most sessions. The most salient feature here I would suggest, is that the basic lexical consensus between observers is at a very general, non-technical, apparently non-therapeutically oriented level. This is a notable event. One might think that a collection of therapists who have been extensively trained in a particular specialized theory of therapy would be linked by a specialized lexis. But this is not the case. Instead, the lexis which linked these observers was a lexis that I would suggest any literate person might use. These observers do not exist consensually in a domain of technical words. In other words, the criteria that were used to choose these observers, namely, that they had all been involved in at least a year of specialized, intensive, post-

graduate training in systemic therapy, are not clearly apparent in the lexis that they commonly used.

While I was conducting the analysis, I became very perplexed about this phenomenon, and so I searched for more and more words in an attempt to find the words that the observers commonly used. My expectation was that there would be some technical words which were consensually used. I suppose I could have looked for more words, but after 440 words, the possibilities of finding what I was looking for were very small. Therefore, I decided to look for other lexical patterns that might emerge.

Divergence between observers

One major point should have been clear at the time, but it is only in looking back on it now, that it becomes clear. My interpretation at this time, is that these observers were not the same, not even in terms of their theoretical approach to therapy. One might say they were the same because they had all been trained in systemic therapy, and a substantial portion of their practices involved working with individuals, couples or families from a systemic perspective, but this similarity was not manifest in the way they described therapy. I suspect that if I had included therapists from a variety of theoretical perspectives, that the basic common patterns of their lexis would have been no more nor less consensual. Therapists who are apparently identical according to training, are actually divergent in their methods for constructing therapeutic processes. We will see that this statement can be supported in many ways.

I would also suggest that what is consensually unique about these observer-therapists is not the technical or theoretical language they use, but rather the ways that they go about organizing and making sense of events. In other words, perhaps therapy, for these individuals, is a phenomenon of personal construction, rather than theoretical, or technical description.

C Patterns of Lexis

Although the interpretations that can be made about lexis are limited, and although there is a limited consensual use of some general words in the lexis of these observers, it is possible to notice some regularities in the patterns of lexis in the sessional descriptions. The word 'regularity' is being used here in a way which does not imply predictability. More simply, because one session

was described with a certain pattern of words, this does not imply that the therapist who conducted the session would always do therapy that would be described with these words; nor does this imply that another set of observers would have used these words in this instance; nor does this imply that if the same session and same observers, but a different researcher were involved, that the same pattern of words would be used.

Maturana makes this point clearly: "We can not predict others. We can not predict ourselves. We can observe regularities, and within those regularities, we can have expectations, and we do. And we get trapped by them, because we confuse the expectations that we have because we have seen regularities, with features that pertain to something that is independent of us" (1983; s.1, p.7). With this attitude in mind it is possible to discuss the lexical patterns in the sessional descriptions.

Primary distinctions and eigen values

Firstly, notice that the 'primary distinction' words are what they are; 'change', 'process', 'happen', 'relationship', 'shift'. They are not 'transference', 'analysis', 'contract', 'cathexis', 'congruence', 'self-actualization', or 'personal growth', or any number of all the vast general terminology that is available in the general domain of psychotherapy. Of course, I specified these particular words in the questions I asked the observers, and they responded by talking about these words. However, my selection of the words was not an arbitrarily arbitrary choice. It was an arbitrary choice, but the arbitrariness was historically seated in the history of interactions in myself, and between myself and the community of therapists with whom I associate.

Before the formal research began, I had experimented with various words, and in fact, these particular words were not preselected; instead they became evident through the process of conducting the interviews. These were the words that seemed to specify the domain which both myself and the observers were interested in exploring. This was not true in all cases. For instance, when I asked Tim about the relationship in Devon's session, he had very little to say about it, except that the word relationship did not seem to apply to that session for him. When I asked Devon whether there had been a therapeutic shift in Gary's session, she asked me what I meant by that, and I asked her if there had been a shift. After some thought she said there had

been a shift, but not a therapeutic shift. We discussed this again later, and it is still not clear what we are meaning by, "therapeutic shift". Evidently, this is an ambiguous term. Devon also noticed that I had asked the question about change in different ways, with different observers; and I see now that I did. The other observers seemed to assume that they knew what I meant and did not seek clarification of the questions. Judging by Devon's remark, it is possible that there were more questions and uncertainties about the questions I was asking than were being expressed.

My point here is that although the primary distinction words seem to indicate a consolidated class when considered in comparison with all the other general words used in the general domain of psychotherapy, a closer investigation shows that the use of these words, among this group of observers has not yet stabilized. In other words, the meanings of the primary distinction words has stabilized sufficiently that they can be used, but not sufficiently that they can always be used without specification or in the same way by a variety of observers or therapists.

I would suggest that this indicates something of the genesis of language among a community of observer-therapists. Language changes concurrently with the structural changes within and among the people who interact to produce that language. Von Foerster talks about the ontogenesis of language in the following way: "Consider an infant interaction with what for us is a 'ball.' After sufficient interaction, he begins to experience the ball as an invariant. His recursive behavior, operating on the result of his previous operations, reaches a stability [which is first the behavior value 'ball', and then the semantic value 'ball']" (p.142). Meaning is not predeterminate, fixed, or final, but stable values do arise. Maturana suggests that, "Meaning arises in the domain of recurrent interactions of organisms for the observer. .... Our distinctions are always changing" (1983). I would suggest that in the case of the observations I have described in this research, it was frequently true that I had had insufficient interactions with the observers for us to have reached a stable sense of the meanings of the primary distinction words. At the same time, the opposite is also true. Evidently we understood each other well enough to communicate perfectly. In other words, we completed the specified activity.

Structural plasticity and language

Part of the confusion about what these words meant may have been related to infrequent recurrent interactions among myself and the observers, and part may have been related to the phenomenon that Maturana describes; which is that our distinctions are always changing. So, for example, I might do this research again and again, asking the observers the same questions, and they might become clearer about what the questions mean, or they might not. The point is that their understandings of the question would be changing at the same time as my understanding of the question would be changing, but not necessarily in the same way. At the same time, the nature of our recurrent interactions would be changing. I think that Maturana's discussions about structural plasticity, and the ontogenetically linked histories of structurally coupled unites, relates to my discussion about the unstable stable values.

The idea of language and language users co-drifting through structural changes might be more apparent to an observer reading this report ten years from now. Or consider how it might appear to a financial analyst, linguist, or whoever else. The meaning of what is written here will vary according to the reader's history in language. By definition, I am a participant in a community which has created the history of the words we used in this investigation. This means that we, in this community are aware of how to use these words, and yet we are also most blind to the beliefs which are implicit in these words.

Part of the nature of the words we use is that we become blind to that which is most obvious about them. I would suggest that between myself and the observers we created a consensus, but because we are that consensus, and because this consensus is both constructed out of our methods for constructing the world and at the same time is our construction of the world, anything we say, or do about that consensus creates more of the same. Maturana explains the situation like this: "a system is blind to its rules, because it is closed - we are in a system of beliefs in which everything we do is confirmatory of the beliefs of which we are part" (1984, p.9, s.4). I think this is what we were doing - building up our belief system, so that everything we saw became part of that. Someone who is external to this system would have a different view, so far as it is possible to have a different view while still participating in the same cultural linguistic history.

In this sort of situation, it is impossible to stand outside the system of beliefs which were, or are the situation. The observer, in this case myself, is always a participant in bringing forth the situation. There is no escape. Maturana suggests that, "The logic of the *description* **and, hence, of** *behavior* **in general is, necessarily, the logic of the describing system; given** *behavior as a referential and deterministic sequence of states of nervous activity in which each state determines the next one within the same frame of reference"* (1979; p.52). The history which determined my structure at the time I spoke with the observers is still largely the history which determines my participations now. Ontogenetically, I have not changed my organization. I have undergone structural changes - this is inevitable in the course of prolonged interactions with these observers' descriptions; but organizationally, I am still the same identity. Maturana also indicates that, "If a change in the frame of reference takes place while a given *behavior* develops, a new one develops, such that the states following the change are determined with respect to it" (1979; p.52). In the case of my participation in this investigation, my frame of reference has shifted, and this report is a behavioral indicator of that.

My shift in understanding

The only perspective I can provide on the descriptions is through explaining how I make sense of it now. My position now represents a structurally different situation than my position then, at the time I spoke with the observers. Through interacting with the descriptions, new structural patterns of understanding developed. As new structures developed, my methods for constructing the world changed, so that even the new structures were recreated. In a sense, then, what I present here, are the differences that make a difference to me, at this time now, compared to that time then, when I first spoke with the observers.

One of the major changes which I am aware of having made while participating in this process is that I have virtually abandoned the attempt to compare the patterns of similarity between the characteristics attributed to therapists by observers, and the characteristics that those therapists attributed to other therapists. I had initially expected to be able to show that a community of observers would consensually describe a therapist similarly in some

respects to the way the therapist would describe others. In very simple general terms, I had expected to find that person A would describe others in much the same way that others would describe person A. And I suppose I might have coerced some observational patterns to support this notion. Now I would basically say that our frames of reference are too diverse to support the notion of consensually verifiable personalities. We speak the same language, but we inhabit diverse histories, and so our descriptions of each other are divergent. It's almost a truism that one's self-description will always diverge from the descriptions attributed by others.

Operational constraints and assumptions

I could say for example that all of us in this community of participants (observer-therapists) have read certain books; that we are generally familiar with certain ideas, and I could explain the theory and polemics of systemic therapy, but this is not my purpose here. This has already been done, and I do not think it would be useful to discuss the general theoretical principles. Many of the technical words used in the descriptions collocate with the general area of systems therapy theory; so one can say the observers talked about pacing, or joining, or reframing, and so on, but my purpose here is not to catalogue the use of the technical systemic lexicon; nor is it to theorize about techniques. Let us accept that these observers spoke about a common variety of techniques which have been well described elsewhere.

My purpose is to describe and explain how these observers constructed therapeutic reality. We represent a community who operate within a specified general consensual domain. I have said that I can not get outside this community to talk about the rules from a different perspective. I have also said that from within this community, I am not interested in explaining the theoretical techniques which are part of the rules or belief system which define this community - this would be tautological. A systemic therapist is someone who does systemic therapy, more or less, according to the conditions that were specified at the outset of this investigation. I assume that the reader is familiar with the general area of systemic therapy.

Because I can not describe this consensual community from outside, and because I have chosen not to elaborate about the distinguishing belief system which defines this community; I am left with describing and explaining the

similarities and differences within this community. More specifically, I am virtually left with explaining the differences. This is because the major similarities are either inaccessible, or have been accepted as given.

Self-referential distinctions

The best, and perhaps only way to distinguish these differences is self-referentially, that is; how are the components within this community internally distinguished. It's like this. Suppose someone is an aspiring downhill ski racer, and he goes to an elite ski camp, where retired champions are coaching. He might ask each of the coaches about how to be a good downhiller. Each of the coaches gives different advice depending on their styles and their perceptions of the needs of the aspiring racer. Now if I am also a proficient racer, and I ask the aspiring racer to talk about how the coaches explained racing to him, he will not talk about the history of ski racing, or about the basic techniques everyone accepts, nor will he talk about general similarities such as, "Well, they all think it's important to train, and practice, and have a winning spirit", and so on - these things are either too obvious to be noticed, or too general to be notable. Instead, he will compare the specific qualities of the coaches that were relevant to him. For example, "Klaus is a European technician, he believes in practicing the basics of slalom and giant slalom. Carl is more American, he talks about focusing, and letting the skis run. Bernard is a competitor - he thinks racers should race, and he goads his team into competition with each other."

The necessity of judgements in the distinctions of divergence

This project is similar to the metaphor about describing ski coaching in the sense that the purpose here is to explore how observers construct their ideas about therapy, and this report is offered within a community of experts who are interested in relevant distinctions, and not basics. Like the aspiring racer, I come into this with a background, with certain intentions, and a personal way of viewing the world. Everything I say is relative to my history - my ontogeny. I have not set about this investigation in order to say that one observer or therapist is better than another, but it is inevitable that I will make judgements about quality, and that the reader will make judgements. I hope these will be understood relatively. I would rather make statements and let the

reader interpret them, than not make statements and try to whitewash everything for fear of offending someone.

In a sense, the similarities can best be revealed by talking about their differences. When we talk about differences, then we describe the specifics and the details, which are more informative than vague general similarities. The purpose is not to talk about differences for the sake of differences, but to talk about the differences that are useful in distinguishing the characteristic styles of construction of each of the sessions and each of the observers.

From my position, in this community of language, It is difficult to gain a vantage from which to have a perspective on the observers' descriptions. One sort of vantage is obtained by noticing how observers' descriptions diverge. Some problems of comparison, and judgement result from viewing the descriptions this way. But some vantage is necessary, and no vantage can provide all the perspectival shift that would be desired. I think this problem of obtaining a perspective exists whenever a community member asks; How do we go about being who we are? Von Foerster has discussed this problem, and partially resolved it through an historical approach:

> Ontology *will not* address itself to how things came about. Constructivists argue that this excludes accounting for the appearance of certain things. For example, if I look at my navel from an ontological point of view, I am unable to explain that funny thing on my stomach. It's a curlicue. Why should it be there? It's useless; it's a joke. There is no way of accounting for this peculiarity on my body. Ontogenetically, it is a necessity for my existing. It accounts *for my coming into being.* The ontology accounts only *for me being there.* Ontologically, language cannot account for itself. We need to ask not *what language is,* but *how it emerged.* To ask what language is will always invite us to presume the existence of an objective world. First there were things and then we learned to name them (Segal,1986; p.149).

The approach in this investigation is to comment on our ontology as therapists indirectly by describing the divergent characteristics of these observers.

Divergence in lexis

Within the lexis of this community of observers and therapists, there are patterns of divergence. The lexical analysis proved particularly useful for distinguishing major differences between the sessions, and the distinctions which were brought forth would not have been apparent in the same way had

other methods of analysis been used. This kind of analysis is something like the stock market prices that are listed in the newspaper. The numbers themselves say little about trends, past or future, but they give a quick review of the current situation. The meanings that can be obtained are limited, but for the informed observer, the limited meanings which can be obtained can be informative, and the information can be obtained rapidly. To some extent, the lists of words and their frequencies as used in the descriptions of sessions, provide a quick method for scanning the superficial situation, and for some purposes, a superficial reading is all that is required.

For example, it is quite easy to notice, by looking at the lexical frequencies in the composite session descriptions, that Gary's session was not described with 'internal state' words whereas Tim's and Gisela's involved substantial numbers of internal state words. Gary's session was described with a lot of 'behavior' category words, whereas Neil's session was described with very few of these. Recall that we are considering consensual patterns here. These are the differences which we can notice by looking at the composite descriptions provided by five observers about each session. These differences lend support to the argument that a community of observers with some similar training, consensually distinguish major patterns of difference between four minute sessions of therapy. Although on one hand, this phenomenon seems to indicate that that these sessions were different, on the other hand it indicates a remarkable degree of consensuality in the way that these observers describe each other's work.

It is possible, by looking at the lists of sessional description lexis, to notice the similarity between Devon's session and Tim's session; to notice the similarity between Gisela's and Neil's session; and to notice that Gary's session is unique, and all these comparisons can be observed in several ways depending on how specific one wants to be.

The categorical lists (e.g., primary distinctions, cognitions, behaviors, etc.) of session description lexis can not be used to show that all the observers described the sessions in a particular way. In fact, the more words there are in a certain category, the greater the variety of descriptions, and this variety could indicate divergences of description.

I would suggest that if a researcher were to analyze the descriptions of many sessions of therapy, and if the categories of words became standard,

and were based on many observations, and if the lexical analyses were performed rapidly by computer, this could be a useful method for obtaining a succinct overall impression of the patterns of divergence among session descriptions. In this case, I have conducted this study with a small, relatively homogeneous group, and I have had to create the method and the categories, so in this case the method has been very time consuming; and while it is illustrative of some possibilities of this sort of analysis, the costs of labour in this particular investigation have been high. In some ways, a simple 'eyeballing' of the transcripts could have revealed many of these patterns. The disadvantages of 'eyeballing' are that it is irretrievably subjective, and many of the more subtle patterns would be simply lost.

Unique session words

One of the most useful methods for revealing differences between sessions were the lists of words that were used only in the descriptions of individual sessions. One notable quality of these lists was that they showed how much the observers' descriptions were context-specific. The lexis in the composite descriptions of sessions included words which were used repeatedly to refer to specific incidents, behaviors, inferences, or objects. These lists suggest to me that the observers' descriptions crystallized around certain critical moments, events, objects or inferences. These moments were different from session to session.

This is a crucial point in the discussion of the differences between these session descriptions. The patterns of words used uniquely in each composite session description suggest to me that these observers were not, in general, exclusively attempting to describe certain particular processes in the sessions. Instead, they were observing the particular unique focal elements of each session. For instance, in Tim's session, they used the word 'depressed' 33 times, at least four times by each observer; and they used 'bus' 51 times, at least 7 times by each observer; and these words were not used at all in the descriptions of any other sessions. Clearly, there were some aspects of Tim's session which were unique, and focal. The important point is that the observers were varying their descriptions according to the sessions. This suggests to me that at least part of the creations of the descriptions involved the interactions of the sessions with the observers; and that observers, in part consensually

drifted towards crystallizing their descriptions around certain elements. This phenomenon is distinctly different from formulaic description.

The elements in the sessions which seemed to precipitate crystallized, or stabilized nominalizations were widely disparate and resist categorization. In Devon's session, the words 'TV', 'motivate', 'twenty', and 'energy' stand out. In Gary's session, one notices the use of 'mommy', 'party', 'job', 'grow', 'dumb', and 'pink slip'. In Neil's session, the words, 'sisters', 'alternative', and 'perfect', stand out, although not as clearly as do the crystallizing words used in the descriptions of the previous three sessions. Gisela's session seemed notable for not having any uniquely crystallized lexis, except maybe 'apologize', 'daughter', and 'distant'. If we compare Gisela's and Neil's session, with Devon's, Tim's, and Gary's, we can say that Gisela's and Neil's sessions lacked precipitating elements. One might say that the observers did not identify a focus. This aspect is notable in light of the fact that the observers also converged on the idea that if there were changes in these two sessions, they were minimal. The observers also generally converged , (with the notable exceptions of the observers who were also the therapists), on the idea that the processes in these two sessions were 'cognitively', or 'informationally' oriented.

I will summarize the three concepts I have just described. One, the lists of words used uniquely in individual session descriptions were important identifiers of patterns of divergent description among sessions; and observers varied their descriptions radically, according to the specific contents of the sessions they were describing. Two, the observers' descriptions tended to crystallize around a few unique words in each session. Three, those sessions which lacked precipitating lexical elements, were also the sessions which were textually described as lacking focus, and obvious indicators of client change.

Once again, please recall that these are my observations. My opinion about the statements I have just made is that therapy sessions in which change is consensually indicated, are sessions which are described with a high use of certain words that are particularly germane to the particular session. I think it is also likely that unsuccessful therapy would be described the reverse way, but I have no evidence for that at this time.

D Textual similarities and differences

The discussion of the similarities and differences, at the textual level, between the composite session descriptions needs to be introduced with some of the same remarks that were made about the patterns of convergence and divergence at the lexical level. I will rephrase these remarks here.

In the last chapter, I attempted to show some of the patterns of similarities and differences among the textually based descriptions of each of the sessions. That attempt required me to make some generalizations about the observers' comments, in order to show how they were similar. Even with these generalizations, the similarities between the observers' descriptions were difficult to discern, and those similarities which were discerned were sometimes distinguished at the cost of ignoring some differences. This problem is compounded when one attempts to distinguish the similarities between the composite session descriptions (e.g., all descriptions of Tim's session compared with all descriptions of Gary's session). Each of the sessions was quite different from any other, and the descriptions of each session also varied widely. Therefore, the variations among sets of composite session descriptions are complex.

Divergence and stability

In essence, once I began attempting to compare sets of sessional descriptions, it became apparent that whatever similarities I found, were mostly the similarities that I had created. For instance, I might say that at the textual level, all the sessions were described in behavioral, explanatory and conceptual terms. And I could say that this shows something about the way that the observers constructed their descriptions of therapy; and this could lead to a discussion of patterns of recursion in descriptions, according to the theoretical foundations in Bateson which were initially used to generate the categories. Although I would like to make a few comments on how these categories can be used to illustrate some patterns of convergence and divergence in the observers' descriptions, I do not want to suggest that the categories themselves constitute similarities between the observers' descriptions. The problem is that the categories themselves are really the only unifying recurrent construction in the descriptions.

This situation demonstrates Von Foerster's description of the generation of eigen values. He uses the example of the programmable calculator which continues to calculate the square root of whatever number is entered. As the machine calculates the square root of the square root of ... etc., it operates in the same way, on each result that is generated. The result is that the answer is always the number one. The machine operates on its own operations, and always generates the same number regardless of the initial input.

Self-definition

In other words, the result is a function of the operator; the initial value disappears. This example illustrates something about the ontogenesis of language through the internal operations of recursion in the closed system of the language user. Language has consensual value because the operators of language have chosen to recognize the existence of other like-minded operators who generate stable values in a similar fashion. Maturana seems to suggest that this choice to include the other is represented by our word 'love' and he seems to suggest that the existence of love is a fundamental given in the human condition.

However, the distinction of the degree of will or choice that people have in generating society and language is not the particular topic of discussion at this point. The topic here has to do with my observation that in order to distinguish patterns of convergence among sets of composite sessional descriptions, I need to operate on operations of interactions that I have had with the descriptions; and what emerges from this recursion of internally generated operations are essentially the stable values of the operations that I have performed. These stable values are represented by the categories used to organize the textual descriptions, and these categories have little to do with the initial descriptions.

Behavioral descriptions

If I say that all the observers included degrees of behaviors, explanations, and conceptions in their descriptions, I will have first had to distinguish certain words as belonging to certain categories. These categories were themselves generated through extensive recursions of my interactions with some literature and with the descriptions.

I can say, based on my understanding of the behavioral category of text, that the observers often spoke of subtle behavioral changes (nods, smiling, postural adjustments, hand motions, vocal tonality, etc.), and that although different behaviors were observed in each session, these behaviors were often given as evidence of the kind of relationship, the nature of the process, or the degree of change, that the client and therapist were engaged in. It is also clear that these statements reflect my belief in the importance of the observation of subtle behavioral communications.

Once a category of behaviors has been established I can operate on it further. My operations on the category above involved my distinguishing certain aspects. The aspects which I distinguish, are those which make a difference to me, and at the same time, are confirmatory of my belief system as a therapist; which is that behavioral changes are crucial indicators of therapeutic process. So I notice that which demonstrates and confirms my beliefs. I do not have to distort the observers' descriptions to do this. I have shown extensively in the last chapter that observers described many specific behaviors, and these specific behaviors were critical indicators of process.

Another observer with a different ontogeny would distinguish different categories, and would generate different operations on those categories, and would inevitably arrive at the stable values of the operations inherent in his or her ontology. This is perhaps a simple point; the reason I emphasize it is to demonstrate that it is impossible for the observer to escape the recursive operations on operations which generate both the observer's being, and the products of the observer's interactions with others, namely, the stable end-states, words.

Similarity of divergence in explanations

For the purpose of exemplifying my explanation of the self-defining qualities of description, I will illustrate some of the similarities that arise from patterns of divergence. Notice that the composite session descriptions were similar in the sense that observers explained the behavioral descriptions in distinctly divergent ways. The point here is that one of the similarities between the composite descriptions was that in each set of composite descriptions, each of the observers explained the specific behaviors described above, differently.

Within the system of beliefs from which I operate, this is an important observation. It is also an observation which is consistent with the notion I described above, which was that observers generated descriptions from within their closed systems of recursive operations. Observers simply could not have not explained their observations the same way. Even in the situations specified by this investigation, where the 'triggers' have been reduced to four minute examples of therapy, and where the observers have had similar histories of training, their explanations of their observations are divergent.

I would suggest that this aspect of my discussion of the observers' explanations has significant implications for the conduct of research in therapeutic process, and therapist training. I would suggest that research and training should be founded on the premise that individual therapists are distinct, unique, ontogenetically determined closed systems. This means that individuals construe the world differently, and no amount of training, or experimental rigor can succeed in exorcising these differences.

Conceptual descriptions

At the level of conceptual descriptions among the sets of composite session descriptions, the observations I have made about the behavioral and explanatory levels also apply; and one or two other notes can be added. At the conceptual level one can see some agreement between observers within each set of observations, and although there is some repetition of concepts between composite descriptions, the sessions were sufficiently different that there was a relatively low degree of repetition. Therefore, it is not useful to look for similarities in terms of repeated use of the same concepts. I suggest that the notable similarity is similar to the similarity which was indicated at the explanatory level. This is to say that the composite session conceptual descriptions were similar in the sense that the concepts which were used repeatedly within composite descriptions, were explained differently.

For instance, in Gary's description of his own session, he said that he was relabelling the boy's behavior in a relational focus; which he explained as: the boy's behavior was described as being protective of his mother. Tim described an acceptably similar concept in his description of Gary's session, which he called reframing; and he explained it this way: what was most important was complementing the son for giving his mom a full-time job, and

yet recognizing that he was paying a high price for that. Or consider the similar differences between Devon's and Gisela's descriptions of Neil's session. Devon conceptualized that Neil was introducing alternative directions, which she explained, in part, by saying that he was systematically introducing some doubt into the client's world-view, and attempting to bring her into his world-view. Gisela conceptualized that Neil was helping the client to "entertain alternate perspectives", which she explained in part by saying that the client was looking at herself, her family, and her relatives in a cognitive way.

The ontogeny of divergence

In these pairs of conceptual and explanatory descriptions one could say that the concepts are sufficiently similar to be equivalent. If I had been summarizing, and thematizing the transcripts, as is often done in the phenomenological style of research in this area, I probably would have summarized and classified these pairs of concepts identically. I am suggesting that what becomes apparent through the analysis that has been conducted here is that the apparent equivalence of concepts masks the explanatory differences.

I have made some suggestions in the previous chapter about how one can consider the divergent referential systems which generate divergent explanations, and I have suggested that divergent referential systems imply different ontogenies. Different ontogenies mean that people construct the world differently. In other words, when two observers of therapy agree that the therapist has reframed something, this only means that they have used the same word. The use of the same word may coincide with descriptions of similar behavior, but it is unlikely that it will coincide with the same explanations. Now it may or may not be important whether or not observers provide the same explanation; what is important is that divergent explanations exemplify different ontogenies. The consequences of the recognition of this aspect are considerable.

For instance, suppose that two observers are behind a one-way mirror observing therapy. As they talk, they use some of the same conceptual terms, and point to some of the same behaviors. Suppose the therapist consults during inter-session, and between them they decide that one of the observers should return to the client as a consultant. So the two observers talk to decide

who will go in, and they both say; "Well it does not really matter, because we both think the same way about this, so let's flip a coin." They flip a coin, and one of them enters. Now as the session progresses, it is inevitable that the observer who remained behind the mirror will think something like; "Oh yes, that's good, just what I would have done; oh no, what's she doing now - I don't understand that, why doesn't she do what we were talking about." The observers will inevitably diverge as soon as they act independently. Consensual use of conceptual or behavior descriptions presents the illusion of equivalence. Varying explanations indicate divergent ontogenies; and independent action will confirm that individuals who may use some of the same words, still operate in different worlds.

Metaphorism

Another aspect of the differences between the conceptual levels of the composite descriptions which I would like to introduce here has to do with the use of metaphors in the conceptual descriptions of sessions. Metaphors occur frequently in the observers' descriptions. These metaphors are sometimes difficult to distinguish from technical concepts, but any such distinction is not particularly relevant. The point is that there is a type of description which seemed at once more comprehensive and specific than many of the conceptual descriptions which were used. These metaphors were some of the clearest indicators of individual differences between sessions, and for that matter, between observers. Von Foerster has suggested the word "metaphorism" to describe this phenomenon.

Here are some examples. Devon described Tim's session almost totally through the metaphor of fishing. This metaphor was used to serve many descriptive purposes. It comprehended the aspect of sport, entertainment, fun, mystery, curiousity, anticipation, thrill, uncertainty, certainty, and much else. Tim also used a fishing metaphor when he said that Gary "very quickly reeled the boy in on that one." Tim described Devon's session with the metaphor of the bullfight, and how in a bullfight, there is one chance to thrust the sword in right. This encapsulated his sense of precision, timing, artistry, challenge, and so on. Gary described Tim's session through the metaphor of the stand-up comic who works the audience through building a sense of anticipation. Devon described Neil as a "more a kindly father", which in the context of her description, and

probably in the context of those who know Devon, says a great deal about paternalism, control, authority, benevolent persuasiveness, and so on.

Gary, Devon and Tim used metaphoric descriptions most often in their descriptions. Both Gisela and Neil tended to remain more literal. Of course, to the extent that all language is symbolic, one could argue that there are varying degrees of metaphor in all the descriptions. And this is a relevant point; but if we maintain a more standard literary definition of metaphor, it is possible to say that Neil and Gisela remained more literal in their descriptions. I would suggest that this aspect of their descriptions is connected with the fact that both Gisela's and Neil's sessions were often described as being more cognitively oriented than the other sessions. You will recall that Gisela was described as gathering information, and Neil's session was described as helping the girl entertain alternative ideas.

The distinction of observers by use of metaphor is a matter of degree, as is the distinction of session descriptions by use of metaphor. All observers used metaphors, and all sessions were described through metaphors. Some metaphors were more focal, significant, and comprehensive than others. The one metaphor which all observers used, and oddly they each talked about it only once, though about different sessions, was the metaphor of 'dance'. This was fortuitous occurrence because I would have used Bateson's and Keeney's word choreography regardless, to identify the level of metaphoric description.

E Choreographies, metaphorism, and eigen values

The choreographic level of description includes words which have been generated through many recursive operations in the observers. Metaphors identify both the observer and that which is observed, and they perform this mutual identification incisively, in distilled terms. At they same time, they have expansive meaning. I would suggest that some metaphors are the most powerful form of conceptual description. The peculiar aspect of the metaphor is that it is so clearly a product of the individual observer. Each observer seemed to generate characteristic patterns of metaphor, although it is difficult to define these characteristics.

In the context of the descriptions, metaphors occurred at points when the observers were intent on describing fascinating aspects of the sessions. My

subjective impression was that the metaphors were initiated out of frustration with the capacity of literal concepts to describe what they had to describe. I am not suggesting that one can predict when metaphors will be used, I am simply suggesting that one aspect of metaphoric description seems to be that it is an attempt to say more than can be said through literal conceptual terms. I am also suggesting that the metaphor is a good example of some of the most highly stabilized tokens for eigen values. I am not using the word 'stabilize' here to refer to duration in time; instead the word refers to Von Foerster's sense of the eigen value - the value that will be computed repeatedly once a certain threshold of internal recursion has been attained.

It is possible to talk about a stabilized value that does not endure in time. I would explain this by saying that the structure of the person is constantly changing. It is possible, that the act of bringing forth a highly stabilized value such as a metaphor, could trigger changes in the sensory system of the organism which produced the value. Just think for a moment how it is possible to be discussing therapy with someone, and in your attempt to say just what you mean, you express yourself metaphorically. Often the metaphor seems to emerge without intention, unexpectedly, and yet the expression of it might provoke a change in the pattern of the conversation for both persons.

I was speaking with someone recently, and I was telling him about how I feel more tired and less motivated sometimes now that this dissertation is nearing completion, and I expressed how it's a little like the trip back down the mountain, when there's nowhere to stop, but most of the energy has been used to get to the top. Once I said this, I felt differently about the situation - more relaxed, and the conversation drifted onto easier concerns.

On this topic of how there is change in stabilized values (such as metaphors) Maturana explains how living organisms are constantly changing, structurally, while still remaining organizationally the same:

> So evolution will also be a history of conservation of organization and adaptation; with ontogenies in which structure is changing continuously; in which the unities slide through the realization of their niche, through structural change - this is what is meant by conservation of adaptation (p.5, s.2, 1984).

Segal, in his interpretation of Von Foerster, talks about how the sensory and motor systems are interdependent. That is, the product of one is the trigger of

the other: "Evolutionary studies of the nervous system indicate there is a closure between our sensory and motor systems. Perception and action are interdependent" (p. 123, 1986) If we consider this statement concurrently with the following passage which illustrates Von Foerster's idea of the sensitivity of the organizationally closed system to itself, then it is possible to understand how a metaphor can be described at once as a highly stabilized value, and yet also be of indeterminate temporal duration:

> Let's consider the ratio between our internal and external sensors. We have about 100 million or 200 million external sensors. This would include the sensors in eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and surface of the skin. These sensors receive external perturbations. Our brain has 10^8 neurons with about one thousand synapses each, i.e., 10^{13} internal sensors, which sense electrical impulses from other neurons. This means we are *one hundred thousand times more sensitive to ourselves than to the so-called outside world* (p. 122, 1986).

To return to the discussion of metaphors and choreography, I would like to add that one potentially illuminating method for understanding observers' constructions of therapy would be through the analysis of metaphoric description. This level of analysis would provide access to the observers' choreographies. The value of this sort of analysis is that it is inherently respectful of individual differences. A metaphor is a unique production which indicates the recursive operations of the observer. At the same time, the metaphor is the most condensed description of the observer's construction of therapy - at the time, and in the situation that it was expressed.

F Composite observer descriptions

There are several central ideas I would like to consider in this discussion of the sets of composite observer descriptions (e.g., the set of Neil's descriptions, the set of Devon's descriptions, etc) . Firstly, some of the patterns of convergence will be considered, and this will include a brief discussion of differences that make a difference, thresholds, scales, referential systems, and cycles of recursion. These concepts overlap, and as the reader will have noticed in the discussion so far, it has been difficult to present concepts separately. Following some notes on convergences, the discussion will shift to the divergences.

Patterns of convergence in lexis

In the lexis that was used by the five observers, I have noted the 11 words that therapists all used in at least three descriptions (think, say, not, know, want, talk, problem, work, look, feeling, client). These words define the common lexical domain of description. This list says little about the contextual meanings of these words, but it defines the basic lexical tools with which this community was operating. I have shown how this list can be expanded into general lexical categories which can be used to categorize the vast majority of words which were searched for in the lexical analysis.

As a result of this categorization, one can notice how these observers commonly described therapy with words categorized as, primary distinctions, modes of distinction, and aspects of distinction. The sub-categories of aspects of distinction included; qualities, quantities, spatial dimensions, intentions, cognitions, sensory perceptions, verbal expressions, behaviors, internal states, personal identities, professional actions, and uncharacterized. Within these sub-categories, the categories with the greatest membership, were cognitions and verbal expressions, followed by internal states, personal identities, sensory perceptions, behaviors, and professional actions. Notice that the common pattern of lexis employed by these observers as a group was predominantly oriented to cognitions, and verbal expressions.

I would suggest that the common lexical pattern indicates a lexis which refers to a broad range of experience. Although cognitive and verbal expression words were most frequently used, there was also frequent use of words referring to behavior, internal states, sensory perceptions, personal identities and professional actions. The lexis was not focalized; nor was it predominantly technical. I would also suggest that these observers operated from the full ranges of their own personal forms of experience and lexical expression. Because I can not compare this lexis with the lexis used by different communities of therapists, or with lay people, it is difficult to make general distinctions that are not purely personal opinion.

I think that systemic therapists are generally trained to be careful observers, to organize their observations into patterns, to hypothesize methods for interrupting those patterns, to intervene, and to repeat the previous cycle until the client is satisfied with the outcome. This general method is basically the one that is described by Selvini-Palazzoli, Cecchin,

Prata, and Boscolo; but it is roughly equivalent to the problem solving approach described by several authors in the area of systemic therapy (Fisch, Weakland & Segal, 1982; Gurman & Kniskern, 1980; Haley, 1976).

The activity of observation is directed towards the description of behavior. The purpose is to generate clear useful behavioral descriptions. Intellectualizations, generalizations, and technical terminology have limited value in this process. This convergent aspect of the histories of these observers results in a language which seems similar to the language that might be used by non-experts. I suppose it is possible that if untrained observers were asked to describe therapy, their observations might sound more technical, and include a reduced range of lexical categories.

Notice that the behaviors which the observers described often involved subtle distinctions of head nods, hand-shakes, smiling, laughing, postural shifts, vocal changes, etc. The language of these observers was oriented to specific behaviors; yet at the same time, there were many words referring to cognitions, and internal states. This employment of words in diverse categories might be called 'balanced', although no doubt the reader will have other explanations.

Less frequently used words

If one looks at the words which were used less frequently by all the observers, such as those words included in the list of words used at least once by each observer, one can observe increasing specificity of meaning, and a potentially closer collocation with psychotherapy. When one looks at the words used most frequently by each of the individual observers, one finds both the commonly used words as well as many more technical and specific words. As I demonstrated in the last chapter, the words that individual observers used can be further analyzed into collocational sets, and when this was done, some distinct differences were brought forth.

The similarity of differences

Although one can say that there was a relatively small set of words commonly used by all observers, and although this could lead one to say that there was relatively little similarity between the lexical patterns of individual observers, I think it is also useful to notice, again, that the observers' lexical

patterns were similar because they were each unique. This effectively amounts to saying that the observers' lexical patterns were similar because they were different.

This sounds like semantic play, but I am trying to indicate that to some extent, the observers used unique lexical patterns, and that the differences between the words they used were greater than the similarities. Because this was a consistent feature of the comparisons of their lexical patterns, one can say that the predominant similarity of comparisons of observers' lexical patterns was that they were different. This is an observation which I have distinguished at many levels of this discussion, and it is important. It has important implications. If expert therapists, who are similarly trained, use different words to describe therapy, then one might suggest that psychotherapy research should be designed around methods which are founded on individual differences.

The observation that individual therapists use unique lexis is consistent with, and can be explained by autopoietic and constructivist theories. I have explained the basic principles earlier, so it is sufficient to note here that words represent stable values, which are the end-products of many recursive operations in the language user. Maturana defines language as the "consensus of interactions about a consensus of interactions." Because each person is a distinct organization with a unique ontogeny, the structural processes which generate language are unique. As Von Foerster has noted, the remarkable aspect of language is not that is fallible, but that we can understand each other so well. One of the implications of the observations I have made, which I will discuss later, is that we mistakenly assume we understand what others mean because we use words that we all know. These investigations lead me to believe that we usually only understand each other well enough to get by. There is a much larger realm of possible understanding that could be accessed if we first accepted that we usually do not understand each other very well at all.

Differences that make a difference, and thresholds

In order to describe some of the differences between the observers' lexis, it will be necessary to use the following terms: difference that makes a difference, threshold, scale, referential systems, and cycles of recursion. These

will be described here in the context of the discussion of observers' lexis.The concept of 'the difference that makes a difference' is central to Bateson's discussion of epistemology, and it is closely associated with the constructivist and autopoietic theories of how we generate knowledge. Here is a brief example of how Bateson defines 'the difference that makes a difference':

> We can assert that *any* ongoing ensemble of events and objects which has the appropriate complexity of causal circuits and the appropriate complexity of energy relations will surely show mental characteristics. It will *compare*, that is, be responsive to *difference* (in addition to being affected by the ordinary physical "causes" such as impact or force). It will "process information" and will inevitably be self-corrective either toward homeostatic optima or toward the maximization of certain variables.
>
> A "bit" of information is definable as a difference which makes a difference. Such difference, as it travels and undergoes successive transformation in a circuit, is an elementary idea (p.315, 1972).

A difference that makes a difference is very similar to Maturana's concept of the trigger which perturbs the system. Von Foerster suggests that the activity of the sensory neurons is an 'all or none' process - either the neuron fires or it does not fire. I think this means that the neuronal firing is a close neurophysiological analogy for a difference that makes a difference. In order for a neuron to fire; "A fixed number of synapses must be excited within the period of latent addition in order to excite a neuron at any time." (p.111, 1986).

Maturana suggests that a word is a distinction of a distinction. The initial distinction is the difference that makes a difference, or in other words the neuronal firing. Let me connect this to what is happening when an observer observes a therapy session. The observer's sensory system is affected by many events. Some events occur with sufficient frequency or magnitude (I am not sure what scale is appropriate here), that the sensory neuron fires. In other words, the event marked a sufficient degree of difference, according to the sensory system, that the neuron fired and was noted in the neurophysiological system of the observer. When a degree of difference is reached (and degree is defined by the system), the difference makes a difference to the system. This is sensed as a bit of information. These bits of information are prelinguistic. As bits collect in the system, and as the system operates recursively on the information, the operations stabilize sufficiently to be perceived as sensory

perceptions. These may still be prelinguistic. As the observer operates on the perceptions, some perceptions will be distinguished as stable values which are represented by words.

I am describing this amateurish reading of Bateson, Maturana and Von Foerster in order to explain how it is that observers can all be presented with the same video-tape and yet all describe that video-tape differently. I think one can say that observers are unique organizational identities which process information according to their structures. We have no way of knowing what triggers neuronal firing in each observer. Therefore, we can not say that observers generate the same information at the elemental prelinguistic level. Similarly, we can not know how observers operate on the information, nor what thresholds of recursive stability need to be attained before perceptions are distinguished as words.

Operations in language are many times removed from sensory response, and the internal structural processes of generation can not be traced. Therefore, when we operate in language, we necessarily operate with tokens for stabilized recursions. The words we use are also semantically dependent on the ontogeny of the persons using the words. We each have different histories for each of the words we use. When observers observe, and describe their observations, they distinguish those distinctions of distinctions which pertain to the domain of description in which they are operating. In this case, the domain is the description of psychotherapeutic process.

Maturana has said that the description of recursive processes can be isomorphically applied to various levels of description. For example, we could raise it about two or three notches from the level that has just been described and suggest that words represent differences that make a difference. This is more useful for the purposes of talking about observers' observations. The important proviso here is that words can also be described as the end-products of many recursive operations. If we describe words as the elemental representations of bits of information, then it is clear that all the observers were operating from differing constructions of the video-tapes.

If we move to the next level of description of the observer's descriptions, namely, how they distinguished patterns of bits of information and organized them into more complex patterns of organization, such as change, relationship, and process, then we can also use the word 'threshold' to describe the level

which must be attained before certain words are distinguished as the 'primary distinctions'. I recognize that my descriptions may be needlessly complicating this discussion, but I am attempting to distinguish my use of the terms 'difference that makes a difference', and 'threshold' in terms of the theories in which the words originated.

For the purposes of this discussion, I think it is most useful to use 'difference that makes a difference' to refer to the words, or collections of words, that represent elemental units of perceptions of behavior. 'Threshold' can be used to refer to the level that must be attained in each observer before they distinguish patterns of differences that make a difference as one of the primary distinctions.

For instance, if we compare Devon's and Gisela's descriptions of Gisela's session, one could say that they both spoke of how the woman was crying in the session. Therefore, the event was a difference that made a difference for each of them. Gisela said that she selected this particular segment because it was the only time when the woman showed some emotion, and this expression indicated to Gisela the degree of tension that the woman felt, and it indicated that she felt sufficiently comfortable in the session to express herself emotionally. For Gisela, this affective expression was a change. Therefore, we can say that the difference which made a difference, namely the crying, in recursive interaction with all the other differences that made a difference in that context in Gisela's organization as a therapist, reached a threshold where the crying became distinguished as a change.

In Devon's description of Gisela's session, the threshold was not attained, and the transformation did not occur. Therefore, one can say that the crying was not distinguished as a change.

Notice that the threshold for distinction of change may appear approximately equivalent in two observers, while the components (differences that make a difference) vary. For instance, notice Gary's and Tim's descriptions of Devon's session. Both observers indicated that there had been a change. However, the differences that were relevant to Gary were described as increasing insight, revealing the rules of the game, and exaggerating the rules of the game, among others. The differences that mattered to Tim were the precise phrasing of the question, the repetition of the question, and the client's behavioral change when she finally answered the question.

I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail subsequently, so I will simply mention here that in general, the observers demonstrated considerable similarity of threshold while demonstrating considerable divergence in their distinctions of differences that made a difference. Allen VanderWell suggested a good metaphor to describe this phenomenon. He suggested that the observers can agree on the score, and the rules, and yet have different styles of playing the game.

G Scales, referential systems, and cycles of recursion

There are three other basic concepts that I will describe here: scale, referential systems, and cycles of recursion. Each of these ideas have been introduced in the previous chapter, but I would like to make some modifications to the earlier descriptions.

I have described how the observers' explanations varied greatly, even when their behavioral and conceptual descriptions were similar. In the previous chapter, it was suggested that the concept of referential systems could be used to explain how observers appeared to distinguish differences through comparing an event with a different event in time, space, or context. Frequently, observers explained behaviors through reference to their inferences about the internal states of the client or therapist. For instance Neil suggested that he thought that by the end of the session, his client had changed because she saw herself as being less vulnerable, and not so imperfect when compared with her sisters.

At this point, I want to make it clear that the concept of the referential system is simply an explanatory device which was used to describe the process of distinguishing differences that make a difference, and to show that each observer is organizationally unique, i.e., operating out of a unique ontogeny. Referential systems qua mechanisms do not exist. In other words, the observers distinguish different words because they distinguish different words. As observers of observers we do not have access to the structural operations of recursion through which words, or differences that make a difference are determined. This is a crucial point. The entire discussion of self-creating systems is founded on the premise that these systems are closed systems. Organizational entities can not be disintegrated and still exist; they exist as coherent composite unities. In other words, we can not take a person

apart to find out how he or she observes. The system functions as a system. Von Foerster speaks eloquently to this point in his refutal of the localization of neurological function argument.

The practical consequence of the integral coherence of living organizations which concerns us here is that the words which the observers present are among the only pieces of evidence that we have for describing the structural processes of the observer. In the case of this investigation, I can also discuss the nature of the particular segments of therapy that the observers presented, and I could talk about the history of my interactions with them as colleagues, and about their behavior while describing the video-tapes and so on. I have chosen to focus primarily on their descriptions of the video-tapes.

Although this concept may sound complex, in practice, it is not.; although it is true that one is frequently tempted to forget it. For example, Gary used the words, insight, implicit, explicit, gestalt, hierarchy, structural, paradox, double-bind, hypnosis, pacing, and many other words which collocate closely with the technical therapeutic language used in gestalt, structural, strategic, and naturalistic hypnotherapeutic language. I can not infer from this that Gary operates structurally as all these kinds of therapists. If I put 75 cents into a coke machine and get a coke, I can say very little about how that machine produced the coke.

Consider this point in relation to the diversity of observers' descriptions of the significant processes in the sessions they observed. Consider particularly the diversity of explanations. These experts offered various explanations for the interactions between clients and therapists. From the experts' points of view, there was little agreement about how or why the interactions occurred as they did, or about why they could be described in certain ways. For all practical purposes, the structural mechanisms were invisible to observers. This is not to say that observers can not invent explanations; but it does mean that the explanations which are invented are examples of the end-products of the observers' structurally determined processes.

The ontogenesis of organizational unities occurs through such vastly complicated histories, and through such vastly complicated recursions of operations, that we can never isolate or describe the structural processes through which organisms conserve their adaptations in the mediums in which they exist. This notion has significant implications for the practice of therapy.

For one, the observer or therapist is positioned as the responsible creator of therapeutic process. Secondly, a point which has been mentioned previously; prediction of outcome is not possible. Thirdly, we should use the knowledge which we generate with considerable caution.

I have indicated that the concept of the referential system is simply an explanatory device for discussing the indeterminable structural processes through which observers generate differences that make a difference. The concept of 'scale' is very similar, but I think it is a.concept which is based on more consensually verifiable evidence. To use the coke machine example again; if I go for a coke every day, and everyday I get a coke for 75 cents, I know, with all the certainty that one can practically obtain, that that machine will provide a coke for 75 cents, unless, of course, it is broken. I could say that in this case, I know the scale (quarters, dimes, nickles), and I know the threshold on the scale (75 cents). A scale is a higher level, more stabilized recursion of the processes that were explained as 'referential systems'. A scale is like a metaphor in this sense.

H Use of scale for distinguishing patterns of convergence

For instance, I would suggest that Tim and Devon could be described as operating according to similar scales for describing process and change (their scales of relationship vary). The similarity can be demonstrated in several ways. For instance, in her description of Tim's process, Devon suggested that the client was actively attending to Tim, and that the process was effective because she saw the boy nodding his head, and then laughing a little after Tim made his suggestion. Tim described his own session in very similar terms. If we look at Tim's and Devon's descriptions of Devon's sessions, we again find remarkable overlaps in their descriptions of process and change. On top of this, both Devon's and Tim's sessions were described with many similar technical terms and metaphors by the other observers.

I am not suggesting that these two observers or therapists are identical, or that they do therapy the same way, but I am suggesting that there are about five points of similarity here. This constitutes sufficient information from which to extrapolate a regular pattern of convergence. For the sake of efficiency of expression, it might be useful to say that Tim and Devon operated with similar scales in their descriptions of process and change in their own, and each

other's sessions. Although they did converge in their descriptions of some aspects of other sessions, the similarities were not sufficiently remarkable to indicate similar scales.

In short, I would suggest that the notion of scale is more practically useful as an explanatory concept than is the idea of referential systems. It works well with the concept of threshold, and it is an inherently non-judgmental means for describing patterns of convergence between observers' descriptions of therapy. The trouble with the idea of referential systems is that it begs one to operate as though such systems actually exist. Notice the self-referential nature of scale - a scale is defined as the relations of components which constitute the scale. As such, a scale exists in the domain of the observer's descriptions.

So for example, if I had noticed that Tim and Devon described similar behaviors, explanations, and concepts in reference to change and process, in their descriptions of each others' sessions, I might want to predict that they would describe others' sessions similarly. But this was not the case. If I explained their similarities by saying that they we could describe their comments about each other's sessions on similar scales, then I would simply be using a uniform method for measuring their descriptions in those particular situations. A scale is an external measurement, whereas a referential system seems to imply inferences about objective internal mechanisms.

Cycles of recursion

In the context of this discussion of lexis, it is useful to make some comments about the idea of cycles of recursion. Cycles of recursion were mentioned in the last chapter, and they are more readily identifiable at the level of textual analysis, but there are some aspects of the concept which relate to lexis. I mentioned in the last chapter that Gary's descriptions frequently moved rapidly from one concept to another, so that the listener or reader often has insufficient information to determine how he means some of the concepts that he uses. In contrast, I described how Devon's descriptions cycled more consistently, and regularly through all three levels of recursion - the behavioral, explanatory, and conceptual. This procedure provides her interlocutors with more information about how she means.

The comparison which I have just described is my personal judgement, but I would suggest that it is a judgement which would be shared by other observers; and it can be explained through some of the comments that Maturana has made about language. Up to this point, I have emphasized that lexical usage varies with each individual ontogeny. At this point it is necessary to describe another complementary aspect of language; and this is the idea that language is a social phenomenon. Maturana describes it this way:

> Language does not take place in the brain. Without the brain we don't have language, but language does not take place in the brain. Flying does not take place in the plane. Flying is a relation between the plane and the medium. Now this is so much so that you can train a pilot to fly in an airplane without the plane ever flying ... the plane in terms of the medium doesn't fly because flying does not take place in the plane. Language does not take place in the brain, it takes place in the social domain (p.11, s.1, 1983).

As I have mentioned earlier, Maturana also defines language as the consensus of interactions about about a consensus of interactions. Because language is described as occurring in the social domain, we can describe the operations which generate language through a system of recursions similar to the internal recursions through which internal perceptions and words are generated. But in the social domain, unique organizations interact. Therefore, Maturana suggests that, "Meaning arises in the domain of recurrent interactions of organisms for the observer. There is no meaning for the organism in its operation" (p.5, s.3, 1983). Two participants who converse, or interact with each other, can be said to understand what each other means when they can coordinate their actions, or behave consensually.

Language, consensuality, and coordination of conduct

In discussions between psychotherapists, consensuality is difficult to achieve, and in practice, it is rarely required. When it is required, the domains of distinction are usually conceptual. Occasionally, when therapists work together in teams, they may attempt to achieve consensus in domains of behavior and explanation as well. In other words, the function of description of therapy depends on the domains of coordination of conduct. If a therapist works for an agency in which a supervisor must hear all cases and sign treatment plans, the therapist will present the case in a certain way to achieve

consensus. If that same therapist also works as a member of a team of peers which cooperates in the generation of treatment procedures, the therapist will present the case very differently.

In the case of the research at hand, the situation is more similar to the latter example. In this discussion of lexis, my comparison of Gary's and Devon's example, has been generated through the domains of distinction that I have specified, namely behavioral, explanatory and conceptual distinctions. My distinctions are generated partially through my history as a therapist, and supervisor of therapists. This experience leads me to say that if I want to coordinate my actions with another therapist, then I need information from all three levels of recursion. If I am working with a student or a peer, and we can achieve consensus about the behavioral events, the explanations, and the concepts we are using, then it is possible to coordinate our plans for future actions. Even if we reach some consensus at all these levels, future actions are still difficult to coordinate. However, if we only have consensus at a conceptual level, it is very likely that we will not be able to coordinate future actions. Of course, if I am working with a peer whom I know well, and have worked with frequently, we are already operating in a consensus that has been created through the history of our recurrent interactions, and therefore we may be able to understand each other by using limited conceptual words.

The aspect of meaning and language which is being discussed here has important implications for the practice of psychotherapy, training, and the conduct of research. Most models of supervision and process research have been developed on the assumption that words,once they have been defined, have consistent meaning for observers. I have shown in this analysis, that observers who have a similar professional history, can use the same words differently. I am suggesting that in order to improve our coordination of conduct it is useful to describe the processes of recursion which operate for each language user. This essentially means describing divergent descriptions. In order for a reader, conversant, supervisor, or peer counsellor to understand what another therapist means - so that they can coordinate their actions - they each need some knowledge of the how the elemental 'bits of information' (i.e., words for behaviors), are described, distinguished (explained), and finally organized into comprehensive patterns (concepts).

Of course, coordinated action may be achieved through many processes of description. One effective method involves therapists observing each other. This method for coordinating action can occur at an experiential prelinguistic level. The therapists adapt to each other through recurrent interactions of observation, consultation, and switching roles. However, in the absence of a mutual experiential base, conversants typically require three points of reference in order to initiate coordination of action.

Structural coupling

This point relates particularly to the conduct of therapy. The therapeutic activity known variously as pacing, joining, mirroring, entering another person's reality, and understanding, essentially involves the mutual adjustments of therapist to client, and client to therapist. They calibrate themselves and each other to the way they mean. In therapy, this mutual calibration, when effective, results in a structural coupling such that therapist and client can drift together away from an undesired direction.

If we look again at the lexical level there are many examples provided by observers which demonstrate structural coupling. I have already described how Gary's descriptions were more difficult for me to understand because I did not have enough information to know how he meant the concepts he was using. Notice also, that in descriptions of Gary's session, several observers, particularly Devon, and including Gary, mentioned that when Gary said to the boy, "You should give your mother a pink slip.", the boy did not know what he meant by pink slip. The observers generally said they knew this, because the boy did not respond to the next instruction that Gary gave. In this case, the term 'pink-slip' was not part of a consensual domain.

One of the crucial common elements of the observers' descriptions of therapeutic process was the process of joining, pacing, and mutual coordinations of interactions between therapists and clients. This process can be explained through reference to Maturana's concept of structural coupling. Words are aspects of the social domain of language; that through recurrent coordinations of actions in a medium (structural coupling), which may include operations in language, consensual conduct may be attained; and in the domain of the description of psychotherapeutic process, consensual action is

most effectively achieved through descriptions which regularly recursively cycle through descriptions of behaviors, explanations, and concepts.

Lexis as componential

In the latter part of this discussion it has been suggested that lexis functions as part of the social domain of language. In the next part of this discussion, I would like to shift the focus to the consideration of lexical elements as independent components. Words can be considered in isolation, as building blocks. This is a useful perspective for distinguishing some of the basic differences between observers. Observers can be seen to use blocks of different size, shape, and color. The results of their constructions with these components may be similar or dissimilar. The characteristics of the integrated constructions are not the focus here. Rather, I am suggesting that the components themselves may be described, and these descriptions inform us about some distinctive features of the individual observers.

In the previous chapter, the individual observers' lexical patterns have been analyzed and described, so a few general comments are presented here.

If we consider the lexical patterns of individual observers, without considering how the words are utilized in context, we can gain a fairly rapid general sense of the histories and ontological conditions of the observers. This is because the words themselves have been learned by the observers in the course of their individual histories of structural adaptations in different mediums. Knowledge of history is very useful for understanding how individuals mean. Knowledge of history provides information about how the individuals came to be what they are. History, like the internal operations through which individuals generate reality, is difficult to know much about. Therefore, anything which provides some clues, is very useful.

In the course of daily interactions, knowledge of history is indistinguishable from knowledge of the present. I am making the distinction of history here to indicate that in the course of daily interactions we have artifacts from the past, and we can use these artifacts to generate more complete representations of how individuals construct reality in the present. For instance, if an unknown therapist enters a discussion with systemically oriented therapists, and begins using words such as, reinforce, contract, baseline, self-monitoring and so on, that therapist will be identified by the others as having a

history in behavioral therapy. They will probably anticipate that therapist will continue to construct his descriptions of therapy from components of behavioral theory.

I Lexis and Style

In the context of the observers who participated in this investigation, there was substantial uniformity of history and lexical usage. One can say that they were not constructing their descriptions from radically different lexical components. However, some patterns of difference were distinguished. These differences can be referred to as elements of stylistic divergence. The notion of style is typically used to describe slight variations of presentation. If the differences are substantial, we talk about different forms, or media of presentation.

I think the notion of style is useful for several reasons. For one, evaluation of style can be considered as a matter of individual preference. This aspect of style is consistent with the responses I have had from the observers when they have read each others' descriptions. They have indicated to me that each of the observations seems correct, that all the observations make sense, and they can understand what the other observers meant.

Secondly, style is used to describe the integral, and perhaps ineffable qualities of that which is being described. One might say that a person has a certain style, and perhaps mention a few of the characteristic features of that style. But style refers, in part, to the indescribable effects of the interactions of the parts; so that no one aspect is the style itself. Consider for instance how one might describe the stylistic variations between two virtuosos' renditions of a particular musical composition.

Thirdly, the description of style inherently describes the describer. The description of style typically includes a statement of preference on behalf of the describer. This is not always the case; someone might describe style in an apparently objective fashion - but in order to do this, the person identifies his or her knowledge of the topic, and the range of knowledge indicates something of the perspective of the observer. A knowledgeable observer of style will usually specify an informed preference. The word style is useful because it is typically used in a way that assumes the participation of the observer in the description.

Now I can say, for instance, that Devon's lexis has a professional style. She refers frequently to client and therapist, change, and a wide variety of professional actions. I can say that Neil's lexis indicates a cognitive interpretive style, because he used so many words in the cognitions category; he used the word 'happen' far more frequently than 'change', 'difference', or 'shift', and he inferred many internal states. One might say that Gary's lexis indicates a structural style, or that Tim's words indicate a problem-solving style. Each of these descriptions provide the observer with a reference in the past. These descriptions tell us about the histories of interactions which the language users have participated in. I would suggest that we typically generate this knowledge without expressly verbalizing it. Nevertheless, the knowledge becomes part of the context through which we interpret the ongoing language productions of each of the language users.

The generation of a stylistic context is an important feature of how observers construct therapeutic process. The stylistic context generated by each observer interacts with the stylistic contexts generated by each of the persons with whom the observer interacts. In the process of structural coupling, when observers adapt to each other and coordinate their interactions, the observers adapt their language operations to each other. Each observer generates knowledge of the style and history of the other. They adjust their styles in order to be understood and coordinate their actions.

For instance, each time the observers spoke with me about what they had observed, they chose language which said what they wanted to say, and in a way that I would understand it. Now I have little information about how they perceived my style, but I do know that there were several examples in the transcripts when either the observer or myself would introduce a word, and then we would continue to use that word. One might say that we developed a stable value in the process of our interactions. I also know that the observers saw me as a certain kind of therapist, and a certain kind of researcher, person, and so on; and therefore, they described therapy in a style that they thought I would understand. Had a different person conducted this research, the observers would have described the sessions differently.

J Style, history, structural coupling, and the politics of consensus

I would like to extend this discussion a little further from these particular session descriptions, and consider more about the interactions of style, history,

and structural coupling. If I say that each observer has an individual style, which reflects a history; and if I say that observers mutually calibrate their stylistic expressions when they interact, then I would suggest that we have a basis for describing the politics of consensus.

Suppose that two therapists, with similar professional training, are talking, and trying to understand a particular session of therapy, and we tape record the conversation. I would suggest that what we might hear on the tape is that at the start of the conversation they are using distinctly different lexical patterns. As the conversation proceeds, they will begin using each others' words. By the end of the conversation they will share a consensual lexis. It is also likely that they will have either drifted in the direction of using one or the other therapist's lexis, or they will use an essentially common lexis. Recall the descriptions of how individuals generate their descriptions - how we can not determine the recursive interactions through which descriptions are generated, which therefore means, as Maturana suggests; "We can not easily claim that the other fellow is mistaken." Although one can observe how therapists inevitably construct different realities, one will often find that when two therapists discuss, one therapist's style eventually predominates.

In this example, does this mean that one therapist is more correct, or accurate than the other? I would say no. I would suggest that influence and persuasion have more to do with the politics of consensus than with 'rightness'. This is a simple, but important consequence of the constructivist explanation. Just thirty-five years ago, electro-shock treatment was accepted as the right way to treat chronically depressed patients. Now it is seldom done. At that time, the consensus of medical opinion supported one form of treatment, and now it does not. What was right then, is wrong now. In psychotherapy, it is too easy to forget that consensus determines what is correct. In the case of two people discussing, consensus will be determined by the therapist with a more influential style and history. The determination of how psychotherapy should be practiced is a political event. The individual therapist's descriptions are neither correct nor incorrect, except in the social domain.

I would suggest that the concept of style obviates some dimensions of power in the discussion of psychotherapy. The concept of style replaces these with; personal preference, the ineffable integrity of that which is described, and the participation of the observer in the description. This should not be

construed as a suggestion that there are no standards of practice or training. On the contrary, standards are essential components of the social control of professional practice. But standards can not be used to demonstrate what sort of therapy is right or wrong. Standards reveal the social consensus.

This is an important aspect of constructivism. Lynn Segal describes this aspect well:

> Embracing the constructivist position is potentially liberating, allowing one to tap his or her creative potential. This position rejects the belief in one right answer to the exclusion of all other possibilities. A richness of choice is the hallmark of an adaptable or, in the case of human beings, healthy system. Consider Von Foerster's ethical imperative: "Act always so as to increase the number of choices." Or his moral imperative: "A is better off when B is better off." For the constructivist, life is a non-zero sum game: all players win or all players lose. Cooperation, not competition, is the sine qua non of social existence. The price of this world view, however, is that one must replace the notion of objectivity with that of responsibility.
>
> In the final analysis, constructivism's moral concern is to reduce monsters of reason - fascism, genocide, nuclear war, and totalitarianism - by revealing the nature of the dreamer.

The responsible description of observers' constructions of psychotherapeutic process does not require such moral intentions as those which Segal has ascribed to the constructivists. However, this is a profession in which morality and ethics play a large part. The role that therapists play in the mental health systems requires that therapists examine the morality of both their practice, and their discipline.

I would suggest that one aspect of psychotherapy which needs consideration is the methods that are used for research. The problem with some of the approaches that are used is that they impose a system of reason in order to simplify and explain. Now I am not suggesting that there is anything inherently wrong with simplification, or explanation. The problem really only begins when the results of this research are used to determine the methods that therapists follow. Such simplified rational explanations typically ignore the responsibility of the observer who created them, and they say little about the unique complexities of the individual therapist.

My suggestion would be that we attempt to enhance the differences between observers, or therapists, instead of imagining that they do not exist.

This also entails accepting that each context, and each pattern of interactions, creates new realities. In this investigation, the observers clearly described each session differently, with different words. There were some consistent patterns within observers' lexis, but the integrities of their descriptions were quite divergent. I am certain that if I asked each of these therapists to provide another example of their work, it would be quite different, and yet similar in some ways to the work they presented here.

I think the notion of style comprehends variability. Consider a hockey player, Gretzky for example: his style of play is recognizable in some respects, and yet one never knows what he is going to do from moment to moment. The actual plays he makes vary from moment to moment, from game to game, depending on many different factors. Post facto, one can say this or that play was a classic example of his style. Commentators delight in pointing out these aspects. The informed fan also learns how to interpret the commentator's remarks. The fan learns that one commentator or sports writer has this attitude about Gretzky, and so can be counted on to say these kinds of things, whereas another commentator will offer a different kind of remark. In sports commentary, the goal is entertainment, and although most people recognize that commentators' styles vary, it is not crucial for commentators to explain their perspectives or be responsible for their opinions.

In the context of psychotherapy, it is at once more important for researchers to explain their participation in creating their realities, and more difficult. Experts tend to behave as experts, particularly when we invest so heavily in becoming experts.

K Style, choreography, and metaphor

I would like to make one last point in relation to the observers' different patterns of lexis. This is the idea that the concepts of style, choreography, and metaphor can be combined and used to describe divergent lexis, and many other divergent idiosyncratic aspects of observers as well. One prefatory remark needs to be made before I can explain this.

The prefatory note is that the more that observers make themselves known, the easier it is for them to take responsibility for their descriptions. The more that we know about observers, the easier it is to understand what they are saying. For instance, if I read a report in Newsweek about a problem in the

Middle East, I might know that the reporter is working for an American magazine, and that both the reporter and the magazine typically favour a certain political perspective. This is the commonly known principle of bias. There are many ways for observers to make themselves known. However, because we are operating here in the domain of the description of psychotherapeutic process, I would suggest that the elements of bias which concern the conversation are those which relate to the description of psychotherapeutic process. Consider the example of the sports commentator again. If a commentator is being interviewed for a job, I would imagine that the potential employers would be interested in hearing the applicant commentate a game. The applicant might provide an example of an amateur game he commentated. The employers would not be interested in hearing the applicant's life history, or about his marital relations, or about his family of origin or whatever.

I am suggesting that the same principle applies for observers of psychotherapy. The best way to know how an observer constructs his observations of therapy is by hearing his observations of therapy. This is a simple idea. Consider the example of a therapy supervisor who is working with a team of students or work-mates. On one hand, the supervisor might attempt to be objective and non-committal as part of an effort to let the members of the team generate their own styles. No matter how objective the supervisor tries to be, the team members will form opinions of the supervisor's style of doing therapy, and if they are interested in pleasing the supervisor, they will adapt to those impressions of style.

I would suggest that the supervisor could be more responsible by stating openly how he or she makes sense of the team members' behaviors. This would not only give the team members a better understanding of what the supervisor means, it would also potentially permit them to accept, or disagree with the supervisor's approach. Of course, the usual distinctions which pertain to the domain of expression and understanding apply. In other words, observers will express themselves in ways that fit the medium. This should be all that needs to be said in order to preface the next comment about style, choreography, and metaphor.

I have indicated that the observers used metaphors in their descriptions, and metaphors were described as efficient and expansive vehicles for

describing both the observer and the session. Choreography has been described as a high order of recursion of description. Style has been described as implying personal preference, the ineffable integrity of that which is described by style, and the personal participation of the observer of style. Now I would like to suggest that it is possible for me to make some comments about the choreographic styles of the observers, by describing their use of metaphors.

These comments are statements made from my perspective as an observer of these observers. While reading and working with the observers' transcripts, I have formed images, impressions, or general concepts of each of the observer's set of descriptions. These general concepts can be described as my understanding of the style of description of each of the observers. In this usage, style can be modified by the word 'choreographic' because I am referring to patterns of relations of steps in the dance of therapy. A choreographic style refers to consistent pattern of relations of stylistic components. This can be distinguished from a particular routine or description of a session, which involves specified steps in a specified order.

The usage of 'choreography' here needs to be distinguished from Keeney's usage. These two are not contradictory, but they pertain to slightly different domains. For example, Keeney suggests that: "Thinking in terms of choreography provides a way of understanding the changing behavior and experience of individuals as well as the interactional dance embodying them. Systems of choreography indicate how lower order patterns are connected" (p.128). Keeney was using choreography, in part, to describe the interactional dance between members of client families. The domain in which the word is being used in this investigation is the interaction of the observer with the observer of the observer (myself). In this case, the interactional pattern is simple, while the components are more complex.

The basic interactional pattern between myself and the observers involved soliciting their participation, asking them to select an example, review each others' work, and describe to me what they thought was important. So we developed interactions based on the researcher-participant theme, but up to the point where I had transcribed the tapes of their descriptions, the participants were more active than I. Once I had the transcripts, I began to construct my descriptions and explanations. The participants activity virtually

ceased, and I became the active participant. Initially, the participants made two steps, first selecting a session, and then describing the sessions. At this stage I am creating the complementary steps in this dance, namely, analyzing and then describing my interpretations of the analysis. That is the basic interactional dance between the observers and myself.

Part of the step I make at this stage is the description of the patterns of relations of steps that the observers made during their portion of the research. When this research is completed, the results will be circulated, and a third step will occur. The participants will read this and respond in any of a variety of ways.

So at this stage, now, as I describe the choreographic styles of the observers, it seems as though I am describing their descriptions as integral constructions outside of the interaction between the observers and myself. However, if we take a larger view of the pattern of interaction between myself and the participants, one can see that the comments I make about the observers are simply the components, or steps in my part of the ongoing dance. As Keeney suggests, the description of recursive patterns of interaction involves both descriptions of circular relations, and components connected through lineal logic. I can describe the patterns of relations in the observers of constructions, which is a circular description; but if we examine these descriptions from a higher order of recursion one can see that these descriptions are the linearly linked components of my behavior, and that my behavior is part of the interaction with the observers.

If we move a step higher on the ladder of recursion, then one can see that the patterns of relations between my descriptions interact with the patterns of relations between the observers' descriptions and the observers' responses to the results of this investigation. If an international researcher who was external to this entire process could observe the process from beginning to completion and afterwards, that observer might view the entire event as a component of a collection of research projects. He might view the patterns of relations between these projects as part of the recursive pattern of interactions between researchers and universities, or at another level, between universities and the community and so on.

L My descriptions of observers' styles

The discussion now moves to my descriptions of the individual observers' choreographic styles, with particular references to their metaphoric descriptions.

Gary

In Gary's descriptions the metaphor which stood out for me, and which seemed to comprehend many of his other descriptions was the image of cutting the groove. I would expand this metaphor slightly, and say that he was like a sculptor in the way that he described sessions. He was active, always moving to another position to chisel away some other part of the sculpture he was creating. He had a general conceptual sense of what he was doing and what he wanted to create, and he seemed to keep this conceptual image of both the final product and the steps to its realization in his mind at all times.

There was another side to his descriptions which involved a scrappy, popular language. Although this seemed oddly juxtaposed with his frequent use of conceptual language, it also seemed a natural part of his energetic, informal activity when doing therapy. Like a European craftsman, he had a strong sense of tradition, and he had strong opinions about therapy done by other therapists. He was not hesitant about expressing his opinion; he seemed to relish an energetic discussion. In the same way that he was physically and verbally active when doing therapy, he was sensitive to the physical and verbal activities of other therapists. He was not a sentimentalist. He did not talk about feelings very much. He focused on interactions, especially verbal interactions.

I would say that for Gary, relationship could be described as the degree of active engagement between the sculptor and his creation. The more the sculptor acts - the more the sculptor appreciates and acts concordantly with the material he is working on - the better the relation. Process can be described in this metaphor, as the sequential steps of changing the shape of the material. Change is the cumulative product of all these progressive steps.

In my mind, I see Gary as being characterized by my understanding of his use of 'cutting the groove'. The metaphor that I associate with this, that of the sculptor, characterizes my descriptions of Gary's choreographic style, in the context of this research. This does not mean that I can predict what he will do next; or that this image is fixed; or that I will have the same image tomorrow;

or that any other observers would share the same metaphoric characterization. With this characterization in mind, I am more aware of some of the recursive processes which occur for me when I try to make sense of what Gary says or does. This awareness represents some of the history of recurrent interactions which determine the preconditions for how we will interact together in the future.

Devon

In Devon's descriptions the metaphor which seemed to best comprehend her style of description was her own metaphor; that ~~of the~~ careful fisherman. In her descriptions and in the way other observers described her work, it was evident that she patiently set up all the conditions to 'catch a fish', and then when she had caught one, she was equally careful to play with it carefully to ensure that it did not get away.

In my image, Devon enjoyed, and took meticulous, almost ritual care with all the little steps that are involved in ensuring successful fishing. This attention to specific behavioral detail was apparent in her descriptions of others' sessions. It was as though she was wearing polaroid glasses and could observe the subtle manoeuvres of the fish below the water. Devon focused on the interactions between the therapists and their clients - how each responded to the other. Patience, and attention to behavioral detail were the stylistic trademarks.

Devon spoke of relationship as the pattern of mutual interactions. She seemed to judge these patterns according to whether there was a recurrent responsiveness of client to therapist. Process seemed to be judged according to whether this mutual responsiveness was drifting in a direction that the therapist intended. Change occurred when the client bit and was hooked into a new existence. At this point the fatal conclusion of the fishing process makes this metaphor less than perfect. I will assume that this benevolent fisherman uses a barbless hook, and returns the fish to a comfortable habitat.

Gisela

I would represent Gisela as a communications consultant. This is more of a literal stylistic label than I used with Gary and Devon, and this is consistent, for me, with her more literal style of therapy and description. Gisela seemed to behave as an expert in systems of communication between people. In her

therapy, she was careful to gather information about the network of interactions in the client system. She preferred to get a clear picture before offering advice. In her descriptions of sessions, she described the patterns of communications between therapists and clients, and also stated her opinions about the internal states of the clients. She presented her comments simply, and clearly, without much jargon.

For Gisela, relationship was described in terms of the degree of cooperation between client and therapist. She seemed to ask whether the client was content to proceed in the direction the therapist was indicating. Process was defined in terms of communications categories and the internal state of the client. She would notice if the client was compliant, or puzzled, or torn. These opinions reflected her professional judgement. As an expert consultant, Gisela estimated change conservatively. She was careful not to assume that a shift in behavior in one session meant the client had changed. In her opinion, the evaluation of change required comparative appraisal of the client's behavior from session to session.

Tim

The metaphor that seems to me to describe Tim is his own metaphor of the bullfighter. Tim's session, by a consensus of observers, and Tim's descriptions, seemed to me to indicate a clear focus on accomplishing the task at hand in a graceful and efficient manner. Just as he had a clear idea of how to proceed in his own work, he seemed to have a clear idea of how others should proceed in theirs. In general his style was to carefully prepare, and set-up the client. He carefully assessed the characteristic behaviors, and expressions; and he observed carefully how the client responded to each move that the therapist made. When he felt that he had all the information he needed about the pattern of the client's problem, he started maneuvering the client into a position so that he could deliver the intervention, or sword, in such a way that it could not fail. He believed in getting it right the first time. (the allusion to fatality is again unfortunate)

Tim described others' sessions in reference to these same principles of practice. For him, relationship was not a central word, but he was careful to notice whether the client was attending to the therapist, and in agreement. Process involved whatever stages lead to the penultimate moment. Tim

appeared to be an eclectic bullfighter stylistically. He preferred to play with, or describe whatever patterns of interaction generated between the particular client and therapist. I would say that he judged change according to whether the client died to previous behavior. He looked to see if there had been an essential shift in behaviors which indicated a change in the client's outlook.

Neil

Devon provided the metaphor that seems to me to fit Neil best when she described him as a kindly father. In this role, he was concerned about the emotional and mental well-being of his clients and others' clients. He expressed himself with quiet authority, and was willing to offer advice. He was especially fond of clear thinking. In some ways, he was conservative - he did not usually trust that change had occurred until the client expressed a new understanding of his or her situation. Neil had had a lot of experience as a child, man, husband, father, and person. From this experience he was able to make judgments, and to state his informed opinions about the internal cognitive and emotional processes that bound clients into problems. He was also able to figure out how clients could think differently so that they would not have these problems. Neil was also careful to notice how his own person and behavior influenced those around him. He believed in developing self-awareness.

Neil seemed to assess relationship by whether the client was willing to engage with the therapist in a process of honest self-exploration. If the client was too compliant, it showed too little independence. If the client seemed to be arguing or disagreeing with the therapist, then the therapist did not understand the client well enough. Neil seemed to prefer a mixture of cooperation and challenge in an honest and open discussion between adults. Process was marked by the little steps the clients made in thinking more honestly and clearly about themselves and their situations. Neil was conservative in assessing change. He preferred to see evidence over successive sessions that the clients continued to have improved self-awareness and clearer thought processes.

The metaphors which I have used in the examples above have all been provided by the therapists themselves, or by observers in their descriptions of

those therapists. Again, I will say that these extended metaphors have been used to show my constructions of these observers' and therapists' styles. These have been brief thumbnail sketches of my view at this point in time. They are intended to show the reader something about how I construct my descriptions, and the reader will understand these in his or her own way.

VI CONCLUSION

A Comments on relationship, process, and change

There are a few general comments which can be made about the observers' descriptions in relation to some autopoietic and constructivist explanations, and the topics of relationship, process and change. The observers typically described the five sessions in response to questions about these three topics so some general comments are warranted.

Earlier in this paper, on several occasions I have referred to the unique ontogenies of individuals, and it has been shown that observers provided divergent descriptions of the sessions. I would suggest that Maturana has provided several concepts which can be used to describe and explain the various descriptions that observers provided in each of these three categories. I am referring specifically to the terms, structural coupling, orthogonal change, structural change and organizational change.

Structural coupling and relationship

In order to describe structural coupling and how it relates to the concept of relationship, it will be necessary to review a few basic points. I have explained earlier Maturana's and Spencer-Brown's idea that existence arises with distinction. He also suggests that, "The moment in which we specify a unity through an operation of distinction, we specify a domain in which the unity exists ... a unity exists in a domain specified in a distinction", and this leads to the idea that, "The moment of distinction constitutes a condition of correspondence between the distinguished unity and its domain of existence. There is a necessary correspondence between the unity distinguished and its domain of existence .... there is an invariance of correspondence with the medium. Adaptation is an invariant" (p.9, s.1, 1983).

So for example, if an observer distinguishes a client and a therapist, these two exist in the medium in which they were distinguished. The domain could be a mental health agency where person A is known as a therapist, and person B is known as a client. If we move person A to the soccer field he becomes a soccer player, and person B at work might be a dentist. But so long as one distinguishes them as therapist and client, one also specifies the

domain of their existence. If one distinguishes relationship, then relationship similarly exists in a specified domain. One can distinguish various relationships. There are more possible distinctions of relationship than there are people to make those distinctions. I might specify a friendship relationship with a friend, a work relation with a work-mate, and so on. My relationship with my friend might change many times, but so long as I distinguish that relationship as a friendship it will continue to conserve its adaptation in the medium in which it exists. If something terrible happens, and I cease to call that person a friend, then the distinction of friendship can no longer be made.

Notice that the distinction is made in language in the social domain. There are many aspects of friendship which occur experientially at a pre or post-language level, but the distinction 'friendship', is always a distinction in the social domain of language. If we consider the distinction of relationship, we can say that relationship is that which conserves its adaptation in correspondence with the medium in which it was distinguished. So the question; what is relationship?, could more accurately be presented as; what distinctions do you make when you use the word 'relationship'?

I would suggest that there are certain common distinctions that all therapists, or observers make about the word 'relationship', but beyond this, it depends on the particular distinctions that the particular observer draws. The basic distinctions involve the distinction of at least two persons, one of whom, in the therapeutic domain, is distinguished in some way as the helper, and the other, in some fashion, as the person being helped. Even these basic distinctions could be disputed. Some therapists will not use the word 'help'. My purpose is not to quibble about particular distinctions here, but to illustrate that relationship exists in the domain in which it is distinguished. Basically, so long as these two or more people continue to meet, in the domain specified by therapy, they exist in the basic medium of relationship.

The point here is that relationship can not exist without correspondence to the medium in which it is distinguished. This is an important point. Frequently, in discussions of psychotherapy, someone develops a definition of relationship, and suggests that it should be applied in all therapeutic situations, and people who do this, typically do not indicate that they are making certain distinctions; they suggest that these are the distinctions that are somehow inherent in the words they are using. I would suggest that these

people are making power moves in the politics of consensus. They are involved with the fascism of language.

I am not creating straw men. Here is an example of what I am talking about. This article was printed in a local newspaper very recently. It was written by a colleague, a therapist and psychologist. In this article, she begins: "Last week I referred to a distinction between therapy and counselling. Often the terms are used interchangeably, but significant differences do exist. I will describe some of these." Notice that there is no reference to the fact that these are her distinctions, which exist in the domain she specifies. She is clearly stating; this is what these words mean, period. She continues:

> "Counselling is usually a short-term process (a matter of weeks), whereas therapy may last for years....In counselling, the client is seeking help or advice for a specific problem. The client desires resolution of a specific crisis with a desire only to return to a previous level of functioning.
>
> In contrast, in therapy, the client seeks a new, higher (or deeper) level. Therapy focuses on personal growth, not just resolution of a specific problem. ... [in counselling] The mode is much like teacher and learner. Other than good will and basic trust in the therapist's competence, the relationship between counsellor and client is not a significant part of the solution. ...
>
> [in therapy] The relationship between the person and his therapist is more important than in a counselling situation. The trust and closeness which develops triggers deeply-buried feelings, which may be expressed towards the therapist ... It also requires a high level of skill and self-knowledge on the part of the therapist, who must be comfortable with strong emotion and with negativity directed towards him.
>
> Most therapists move easily from the role of counsellor to therapist, but not all counsellors have the skill to be therapists."

In this example many words besides 'relationship', are being used arbitrarily, objectively, without reference to their domains of existence, namely those specified by the therapist who wrote the article. In some ways, the context of the article as a whole provides a domain of existence for each of the components. For example, it is clear that the author believes therapy is superior to counselling. Actually, in the domain she has specified, short-term therapy does not exist. Short-term therapy does exist for many therapists and clients, but not for this author. She is not saying that short-term therapy is not as good as long term therapy; she simply does not distinguish short-term therapy, so it does not exist. This style of distinction is something like saying

that lawyers who can take care of business quickly and efficiently are not lawyers.

Of course, I would draw distinctions about the words the author is using very differently. I am not arguing whether she is right or wrong, so much as I am saying that she should be clear that these are her distinctions, and not everyone makes the same distinctions. The politics of consensus are very important in psychotherapy. For example, the author of the article is attempting to develop a private practice, and clearly she sees that it is in her benefit to be known as a therapist who has the 'high level of skills', and to have her audience believe that therapy moves one to a higher (or deeper) level of personal growth, and to have long-term clients. This preference does not make her distinctions the 'correct' ones, but so long as some people accept her definitions, those will be the most powerful definitions for them.

When people play with the politics of consensus they often treat words as though they had objectively defined meanings. This author would have us believe that relationship is unimportant in counselling, and very important in therapy. But 'relationship' does not have to be defined this way. It can be distinguished this way, but it does not have to be. The fascist of language uses hidden imperative declarations, the constructivist attempts to make statements in a language that is conditional and self-referential.

In this investigation, the observers seemed to define relationship quite differently from the author described above. Their descriptions of relationship typically pertained to degrees of consensus between the client and therapist. They cited examples of mutual responsiveness of the therapist to the client, and the client to the therapist. Although each of the sessions they described was different from the others, the word relationship was a word that most observers could talk about in reference to every session. In other words, the word relationship seemed to be distinguished by whatever behaviors existed in the interactions between client and therapist.

Coherence, consensuality, agreement

The use of the word 'relationship' by these observers was similar to the way that Maturana uses the term 'structural coupling'. He defines structural coupling as the necessary correspondence between the unity that is distinguished and its domain of existence (p.9, s.1, 1983). In the domain of

human existence, my interpretation of Maturana is that he describes three aspects of structural coupling between people. One aspect is coherence. This is the fundamental, ineffable, experiential 'glue' that brings people together. Without this, society would not have occurred. He suggests that people may cohere, but not structurally couple. For example, two people meet at a bar, exchange pleasantries and depart separately. When people get together and a recurrent coordination of action occurs, then they make structural changes and adapt to each other.

The processes which the observers described as exemplary of relationship in these sessions were similar to the processes of mutual adjustment which constitute structural coupling. The second aspect of structural coupling is consensuality. Consensuality is partially achieved through recurrent coordinations of language and partially through recurrent coordinations of conduct. One could say that some of the observers thought that Gary was not operating in consensus with the boy when he asked the boy if he would give his mom a pink slip. They boy did not know what he was talking about. Later, when Gary was telling the mother the story about how she might recall the last stern yell she used when she really meant that the boy had to come in for dinner, the observers noticed that the mother was nodding each time Gary nodded, or Gary was nodding each time she nodded. They noticed she was smiling, and then she told her own story which was very similar to Gary's. In this situation, one could say that the observers saw that Gary was operating consensually with the mother.

The third aspect of structural coupling is agreement. Agreement is the mutual coordination of conduct which occurs after operations of consensus have reached a certain threshold. Agreement does not require language, but it may operate through language[1]. For example, when Devon was working with her client, the observers described how she was physically moving and

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[1] The definition of, agreement, in this context is clearly different from the definition that Maturana has described (1986). I am using the word to describe an advanced state of consensual coordinations of actions. Maturana suggests that agreement requires language. Agreement, for him, is the process of verbal interaction which occurs in the production of consensuality. I have chosen to use agreement to describe the stage of coordinated action which an observer of therapy might describe as "very good communication", or "a close bond". This distinction serves certain purposes in the description of psychotherapy which are not served by Maturana's distinction.

speaking in synchrony with the client, which showed some consensus in the mutual coordination of conduct; and they noticed how she asked the client several times what she would have to do to stay stuck for the next twenty years. The client was trying to answer her question, so we could say they were operating consensually, but the pattern repeated several times, which showed they were not yet in agreement about the meaning of the question. Suddenly, the woman started to explain what she would have to do, and then she started laughing, and Devon started laughing. Now at that moment of laughing, I suggest one could say that they were operating in agreement.

Operation in agreement is more evident between old friends. Old friends answer questions without them being asked. Small behaviors become shorthand expressions that speak volumes. Old friends can walk down the street in pace with each other, mutually moderating their steps for obstacles, without speaking.

In my opinion, and my interpretation of the observers' descriptions supports this, these therapists were all attempting to develop a level of consensus and hopefully operate in some agreement with their clients. The criteria that I have described Maturana as using to define these three aspects of structural coupling work very well for distinguishing the way these observers used the word 'relationship.'

Process

This discussion now shifts to a consideration of the general comments that can be made about the observers' descriptions of process. It is difficult to generalize these observers' descriptions of process because they referred to such a wide variety of techniques, sequences of interactions, and methods for assessing the processes. Although they were all prompted with the same perturbations, they were each mapping out different representations. Bateson has said that if one tries to find out exactly what the event, or territory is, "What you find is an infinite regress, an infinite series of maps. The territory never gets in at all. The territory is *Ding an sich* and you can't do anything with it. Always the process of representation will filter it out so that the mental world is only maps of maps of maps, ad inifinitum. All 'phenomena' are literally 'appearances'" (p. 454, 1972). Because the territory is inaccessible, one can not describe therapeutic process itself.

Punctuation

In this investigation, I have attempted several methods (consensual, lexical, textual, stylistic) for talking about how observers construct their descriptions of therapeutic process. There is another method which has become apparent in the course of this work, but there is insufficient space in this endeavour to do more than mention it. This method has been indicated by Keeney and Bateson in their discussions of punctuation. Bateson asks;

> What circumstances promote that specific habitual phrasing of the universe which we call 'free will' and those others which we call 'responsibility', 'constructiveness', 'energy', 'passivity', 'dominance', and the rest? For all these abstract qualities can be seen as various habits of punctuating the stream of experience so that it takes on one or another sort of coherence and sense. (p.163, 1972)

In this investigation, the discussion of lexical sets, and how observers cycle through behavioral, explanatory, conceptual descriptions has been attempted, and certain aspects of these discussions have been similar to the concept of punctuation; but I think Bateson is pointing towards something larger here.

Markers

In reference to this idea of punctuation, Keeney (1983) suggests that we consider Spencer-Brown's concept of 'marking' or 'indicating' which of two sides of that which is being distinguished is important. This could be an interesting point from which to explore the observers' descriptions. For instance, Tim isolated a particular event in Gary's session and made it the focus of his discussion. He spoke about how Gary had engaged the boy's enthusiasm in having a party, and for Tim this was the crucial process in the session. Other observers mentioned the party event, but none indicated that it was especially important. The question one might ask is; how can one describe Tim's marking of this particular process?

Keeney suggests that one can describe process markers by distinguishing their levels on his zig-zag ladder of orders of epistemological analysis. This ladder was used as one of the bases for my generation of the behavioral, explanatory, and conceptual levels. There are some merits in the distinction of orders of recursion that observers indicate in their markings of process, and I admit to having attempted only a rudimentary description in this

investigation, but it seems there might be other ways of describing observers' or therapists' process markers. A particularly interesting aspect to explore would be the markers that define observers' thresholds of change.

Markers of thresholds of change

For example, notice that in the descriptions of Devon's session there was considerable consensus among observers in their markings of the moment when both Devon and her client started laughing. Similarly, when I asked the observers if there had been a change in Gary's session, most of them marked the brief sequence at the end of the session when Gary and the mother were nodding in unison. In the descriptions of Tim's session several observers marked the brief sequence just after Tim had made his unusual suggestion to the boy, and the boy laughed a little and then continued to nod his head in agreement. Gisela's and Neil's session were not described as having particular moments which indicated the client had changed.

The question of how we as therapists distinguish change, is an important one. All I can point to in this investigation are these three moments. These moments can be characterized as indicating operations in agreement; and they can be described as representing the requisite threshold of difference which was described as change by these observers. From my perspective, the notable aspect of the marking of these moments is that they seem so subtle; not at all what one might expect to find under the heading 'change' in a textbook on psychotherapy. In any case, the question of how to explain or describe how therapists mark change processes is one that should be investigated further.

Orthogonal interactions

One entrance into this investigation might be through Maturana's concept of orthogonal interactions. He uses this term to describe those interactions with a unity which cause it to change. He describes the concept like this:

> An orthogonal interaction would be an interaction with a component of a system which entails different properties than involve this as a component of the system. ... The organization does not specify the characteristics of the components. It only demands that the characteristics be such that certain relations be satisfied - those which constitute it. ...
>
> Every system that has composite components has many domains of possible orthogonal interactions. This is one of the dimensions through

> which these systems can undergo different histories of conservation of organization in different media, and can have different domains of existence. [as a result of this] They seem to be from some perspective the same entities and yet they integrate different systems because they are involved in a different manner in the composition of the composite unity (p.5, s.4, 1983).[1]

For example, in Devon's session, I would say that Devon interacted with the component of her client which saw herself as unmotivated. At first Devon created a situation where the woman believed that Devon accepted her unmotivated part. (The terms unmotivated or motivated part or component are being used here to describe the woman's domain of description, and belief system) They were operating consensually about this aspect, so they were moving together. However, at the same time Devon was generating a redistinction of the unmotivated component as motivated. This was relatively easy for Devon because although she was operating in consensus with the woman, she also maintained the freedom to distinguish different domains. Once Devon had determined how to ensure that the woman would accept her redistinction of the unmotivated component as a motivated component, she initiated the behavior which triggered the transformation.

This transformation of one component into a different component created a change because Devon had interacted orthogonally with the unmotivated component in such a way that this component could no longer relate to the other components or the woman in the same way as the old one had - it no longer satisfied the relations of components which constituted her unity. Perhaps the woman could have been led to see herself as smarter, or more disciplined than she had thought she was, but these componential transforms would probably have continued to satisfy the relations of components in the unity of the woman. The point here is that this particular orthogonal transform forced a shift in the relations of components such that the woman's organization as an unmotivated person could no longer be sustained.

Organizational and structural change

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[1] Von Foerster suggests that the term "orthogonal interaction" is a descriptive term denoting angle of incidence (1987, personal communication). Heinz reports that he suggested this term to Humberto as a way to describe interactions which impinge at right angles with the relations of processes of production which constitute autopoiesis.

At this point I am introducing a second set of distinctions which Maturana has described. These are the concepts of organizational and structural change. Organizational change is defined as loss of class identity; or the disintegration of the composite unity which constituted the organization. Organization is an invariant which can not change unless it disintegrates. So for example, a living organization can not change without disintegrating as a living organization. However, an organization is a composite unity composed of other composite unites. A student can disintegrate as a student by graduating, and still be integrated as a living person.

Structural change is ongoing. We are undergoing continuous structural change while preserving our organization as living unities. So for example, a person may age, and yet the person who was Bob at the age of twenty is still the same unity, Bob, at age sixty.

The distinction between what constitutes a structural change, and what constitutes an organizational change in the composite unities which compose another composite unity depends on our domain of distinction. For example, one might also suggest that Devon's client underwent a structural change, which attained a certain threshold, and a behavioral change became apparent to the observers in their domains of description. It is not clear which description is more accurate. Maturana himself appears ambiguous on how these concepts of structural and organizational change can be used to explain therapeutic processes.

Perhaps one can distinguish between organizational and structural changes through reference to the idea of the difference that makes a difference. In other words, an organizational change could be described as the disintegration of a composite unity which makes a difference to the composite unity which incorporates it. For example, one man might disintegrate as a husband, and yet this would not make a difference to his unity as a person. Another person might disintegrate as an alcoholic and this would make a tremendous difference to the unity of the person.

This explanation begs the question of how one determines the difference that makes a difference. This question may best be answered by exploring individual therapists' thresholds of constructions of change. Maturana's explanation does not directly explain how to determine the threshold of the observer, but it does provide an efficient explanation for illustrating the

distinction between a difference that makes a difference, and a difference that does not. The determination of threshold of change depends on observers' descriptions; and thus the answer is in language; or as Wittgenstein might suggest; it is grammatical question.

B Comments on the relations between this research and current psychotherapy process research

Rice and Greenberg (1984) prepared one of the few recent and comprehensive texts on psychotherapy research. In their introduction to this text they consider some of the major issues in psychotherapy research, and they present a new paradigm. There are some aspects of this paradigm which are consistent with the method and product of this investigation, and some which are clearly divergent.

They suggest an approach which, "... involves the intense scrutiny of particular classes of recurrent change episodes in psychotherapy, making fine-grained descriptions of these moments of change together with the patterns of client-therapist interaction that form their context" (p.13). This aspect of their paradigm appears consistent with the approach taken in this investigation.

They go on to consider the question; "At this point one might well ask how this fine-grained, almost microscopic level of understanding could possibly have a substantial impact on the broad, strategic issues that currently confront the field" (p.13). Their reply to this question indicates the aspect of their approach which diverges from the one taken here:

> The goal of this new paradigm is to understand the essential mechanisms of client change. What is most needed in the field is the identification and specification of mechanisms of client change at a level that transcends the particular situation in which they are initially recognized and studied. ... Preoccupation with the role of the therapist and the theoretical orientation used have led investigators to lose sight of the mechanisms of change within the client, and yet it is these that we need to understand. It is the client who changes (p.14).

They go on to identify three levels of abstraction which can be used to "understand what the client needs to do in therapy in order to achieve change" (p.14). They give an example of the second level, 'operations', through reference to Meichenbaum's (1977) method for cognitive-behavior modification, in which clients are trained to substitute positive self-statements

for negative self-statements. Rice and Greenberg suggest that this method involves five operations, which I will abbreviate, for the sake of exemplification, i.e.: focus, recognize, stop, construct, explicitly repeat. The important aspect of this example is their comment about these operations: "Such a series of operations can be transferred and used in the context of a very different therapeutic orientation" (p.15).

My interpretations of the observers' descriptions of therapy in this investigation, lead me to believe that 'operations' such as Rice and Greenberg specify, can not be isomorphically transferred even among therapists who ostensibly fit the same therapeutic orientation, unless one also considers how the individual therapists interact with the individual clients to create unique context-specific situations. This is a crucial difference between the approach suggested by Rice and Greenberg and the approach I have attempted to describe.

Failure to make this distinction can result in some of the problems which chronically plague psychotherapy research. Horan (1980) describes these problems as "classic examples of self-deceit" (p.5). He suggests that, "We know what's wrong with our data, but too many of us pretend to our students and to our public that there is solid empirical evidence behind our varied proclamations" (p.5). He describes the perpetration of three myths: the appropriate treatment myth, the treatment deployment myth, and the control group myth. His description of the treatment deployment myth is most similar to the distinction that I would like to make here regarding Rice's and Greenberg's approach.

Horan addresses three delusions in his discussion of the treatment deployment myth. He suggests that, "We are vastly mistaken if we think that our treatments are standardized, that they necessarily correspond to the theoretical principles on which they are supposed to be based, and that they are in fact received by the subjects" (p.7). I would add to this list of delusions the mistaken idea that similarly trained therapists conduct and assess therapy equivalently. My understanding of the observers' descriptions in this investigation is that they were very different from one another. One can say that in their descriptions they did converge in their descriptions of certain behaviors, and change processes, but they clearly diverged in their

organization and conduct of description and therapy. These differences have a profound effect on the course of therapy.

C Summary

This report has followed a rather circuitous route through many diverting distinctions. It is difficult to bring it to closure. This project was never intended to attain certain conclusions, but rather to report on the results of an investigation. However, because it would be helpful to gather together the main ideas, I will attempt to summarize these here.

The central distinction which has been made about the observers' descriptions is that they represent divergent methods for constructing therapeutic process. We have seen divergent patterns of lexis, and textual organization in their descriptions.

The divergence of the observers' methods for constructing therapeutic process was described and explained through my understanding of some concepts which were borrowed largely from Bateson, Maturana, and Von Foerster. I have attempted to demonstrate that certain concepts from cybernetics, autopoietics and constructivism were appropriate for describing and explaining patterns of divergence among observer-therapists' methods for constructing therapeutic process.

The use of these concepts permitted some patterns of convergence to be distinguished among the observers' divergent descriptions. The concepts which were discussed were themselves both the stable recursive operations of distinction, and the stable values which have been reported. Therefore, it is necessary to recapitulate the concepts which distinguished, and which are, the patterns of convergence.

Through my interactions with the observers' descriptions I have come to the conclusion that it is not useful to state categorically or prescriptively how therapists construct therapeutic process. I explained this conclusion through Maturana's and Von Foerster's concept that we are closed structurally determined self-creating unities with diverse ontogenic histories. Bateson's notion that information is news of a difference was used to explain that difference is determined by the structural relations within living organizations. In other words, therapeutic events are intrinsically non-informative. Unities

inform themselves through recursions of operations on operations of distinction.

Although I have said that it is not useful to categorically state or prescribe how therapists construct therapeutic processes, it has been useful to explain and describe how they do this. By saying this, I am placing my descriptions in the domain of descriptions, rather than in an implied domain of objective existence. By saying this, I am also taking responsibility for having constructed these descriptions.

I have described therapy as a context-specific process which occurs as the ontogenic co-drift of a structurally coupled composite unity (therapist-client); and the description of therapy occurs as a similar ontogenic co-drift between the observer and the event being described. Words used in therapy, and in the description of therapy have meaning according to the context of occurrence. Words have stable consensual values, but indeterminable self-referential values. In other words we can talk about therapy in a context of understanding each other, and we can act adequately on our understanding. However, it is impossible to say exactly what or how words mean to individuals outside the context of integrated lived events in which they occur.

From the perspective of the description of the abstracted components of observers' descriptions of therapy, we have seen that therapy sessions can be distinguished by analysis of the lexis used to describe them. This sort of analysis may be useful in distinguishing descriptions of therapy. Because this investigation has focused on a group of observer-therapists with similar training, and because the investigator was a member of this group, it was impossible to compare the common patterns of lexis with an external perspective. One particularly interesting aspect of the lexical analysis was the use of unique words in sets of session descriptions. These unique words indicate that systemically oriented therapists describe particular behavioral occurrences. When these unique words did not occur, their absence coincided with some general consensus that there had not been a significant shift for the client.

The observers appeared to converge in their descriptions of significant changes for the clients. In these instances, they described the same behavioral events, and sometimes conceptualized the change with similar

words. In the descriptions of significant changes, as in other descriptions, the observers' explanations were diverse.

Another notable aspect of the lexical analysis was the occurrence of metaphoric lexis. The use of metaphors appeared to be highest in the descriptions of sessions in which there was consensus that the client had shifted.

From the perspective of the abstracted components of the textual analysis, it was observed that observers cycled recursively through behavioral, explanatory, and conceptual descriptions. I noted that observers had characteristic patterns of textual organization. Similarly, the sessions were typified by characteristic patterns of textual organization. Sessions in which there was some consensus about change having occurred frequently revealed a more regular pattern of behavioral, explanatory and conceptual descriptions than sessions where minimal change had been consensually described. There was some evidence that therapists who did therapy in which change was consensually described, were also observers who organized their descriptions through regular use of behavioral, explanatory and conceptual descriptions.

Although there was some convergence of descriptions at the behavioral and conceptual levels, there appeared to be little consensus at the explanatory level. The concept of referential systems was invoked, together with the related concepts of comparison and contradistinction to describe and explain how observers operate uniquely in their distinctions and constructions of events. It was later explained that referential systems do not exist as mechanisms, but as explanatory devices. The notion of referential distinctions was useful in the generation of the concepts of scale and threshold. Simply stated, a scale is a concept used to describe the kinds of events that make a difference to one or more individuals. Threshold is the concept used to describe a level of event which must be attained for a stipulated process to occur. In this investigation, I have described scales and thresholds in relation to observers' descriptions of change. We have seen that some observers can be described as using similar or dissimilar scales and has having similar or dissimilar thresholds of distinction of change. These have been described as useful concepts in the constructivist description of therapeutic process.

From the perspective of the general thematic category of relationship, I have described the observers' descriptions as demonstrative of Maturana's concepts of coherence, consensuality, and agreement. These concepts describe stages in the genesis of structural coupling. The concept of structural coupling has been used in combination with Maturana's concept of the plasticity of structure in autopoietic unities to describe how two or more unities who interact inevitably co-drift ontogenetically. This phenomenon has been briefly illustrated through the progressive drift towards convergence of expression whenever two unities interact (e.g., the therapists interacting with their clients; the observers interacting with the video-taped sessions; myself interacting with the observers' descriptions; myself interacting with the theoretical literature).

From the perspective of the thematic category of change, it was suggested that the observers' descriptions of change typically involved descriptions of behavioral shifts. At the conceptual level, these shifts were often described metaphorically. Maturana's concepts of structural and organizational changes were used to distinguish between descriptions of change which indicated a difference which did not transform the identity of the person, and those which did. The concept of orthogonal interactions was suggested as an descriptive device for highlighting the nature of the therapists' interactions with specific structural components such that the previous relations of components was transformed.

From the perspective of the description of individual observer-therapists, it was suggested that the concept of choreographic metaphoric style could be used by observers to describe other observers. The important feature of this concept was that it placed the describer in a position of responsibility for his or her description. This concept was suggested as a means for obviating some of the implicit dimensions of power which operate in linguistic politics of consensus. It was suggested that because, "It is hard to claim that the other fellow is mistaken", the distinction of good and bad psychotherapy is a political event.

Finally, some comments were made about the relation between this research and other psychotherapy research which is attempting to determine the specific mechanisms of change in clients, and the specific principles of therapeutic procedure which can be transferred across clients and therapist. I

suggested that the observations I have made in this investigation contradict the notion of transferable mechanisms. Before closing, I will recapitulate some implications of this investigation and suggestions for future research.

D Implications

I have attempted to suggest the implications of my descriptions throughout the text of this report, and I will briefly summarize the major points here. There are three domains of implications. Each level pertains to a separate level of relevance. The first domain is the domain of description. Because part of the purpose of this study was to describe observer-therapists' descriptions of therapy sessions, one level of implication pertains to the nature of the images which have been presented in these descriptions. A second domain of implications pertains to the level of explanation. Because part of the purpose of this study has been to explore and demonstrate the linguistic ontogenesis of psychotherapy process, some implications are suggested which pertain to the potential effects this investigation might have in the realm of explanation. A third level of implication has to do with the potential impact this investigation might have on the practice of systemic psychotherapy.

I am listing a wide range of implications here. The components of this list are not intended to indicate that the results of this investigation directly imply all these consequences. These implications are suggested as stimuli for further inquiry. No doubt, some of the logic connecting some of these implications to the text will appear tenuous to some readers. However, because this investigation was designed as an exploration, and because it is directed towards the informed, interested reader, I think it may be useful to describe a variety of "implications", some of which are only loosely associated with the results of this investigation.

Implications of descriptions

1: I would suggest that the major implications in the realm of description are in the nature of the responses which the participants in this study might have to reading these descriptions of themselves. Similarly, there may be other therapists for whom these descriptions, or mirroring of therapy is informative. My suggestion is that the participants will change in a variety of ways after reading this report, although it is impossible for me to determine

what effects this report will have. Similarly, there will likely be other therapists who practice a similar style of therapy who will be affected vicariously.

2: The observers in this investigation seemed to consensually indicate that client change is attended by: (a) a high degree of consensuality (linguistic and behavioural) between therapist and client ; (b) clearly observable though subtle, behavioral shifts on the part of the client; (c) a fundamental shift in the client's self-identity which is also observable to others. There was little indication that change is a mystical internal event, or a gradual shift in cognitive processes.

3: Observer-therapists' descriptions of therapy typically diverge from each other at the explanatory level of description. In other words, observers may describe similar behaviours, and they may use similar conceptual terms to describe those behaviours, but their explanations of what those behaviours or concepts mean, or how they are derived, are usually divergent. This implies that explanations, or semantic values, are derived from intra-personal self-referential processes that are inherently idiographic. In more simple terms, the implication is that therapists, or observers of therapy may describe similar behavioural of conceptual aspects of a therapy session, and yet have divergent reasons, or meanings for what they have said. This also entails that convergence of behavioural or conceptual descriptions likely does not indicate equivalent meaning. In more simple terms, observers of therapy may describe therapy in similar terms and yet have quite different meanings, or reasons for what they have said.

4: Several implications may be suggested which pertain to the characteristics of good systemic therapy. My interpretations of the observer-therapists' descriptions of therapy in this study indicate that counselling sessions in which a consensus of observer-therapists indicate that significant shifts have occurred for the clients are those sessions in which: (a) there is a high degree of consensuality, or agreement between the therapist and client, (b) there appears to be a synchrony of language and and physical movement which joins the therapist and the client, (c) both the working therapist and the the observers use metaphors, (d) the observers converge in their behavioural and conceptual levels of description, (e) there is behavioural, or sensorily

evident behavioural change on the part of the client (the change may be surprisingly subtle), (f) the observers regularly cycle through behavioural, explanatory, and conceptual changes, (g) the observers focus more on the description of the session itself rather than on their explanations of it, (h) both observers and the working therapists attend to detail.

5: One implication of this study is that the general category of systemic therapists actually includes psychotherapists who practice a heterogeneity of counselling styles, and who describe therapy with a heterogeneous variety of counselling theories. An aspect of this implication may be that the category of "systemic therapists", at least as it was operationally defined in this study may have limited value for describing the nature of therapy that is practiced by these therapists.

Implications for explanation

6: The diversity of psychotherapy styles, and the diversity of styles of description of psychotherapy which were generated in this investigation indicates that psychotherapy is an individual construction. This implies that principles of change pertain to the political realm of consensus generating activities. The meaning, or semantics, of psychotherapy are idiographic. Maturana's concept of multiverses is a useful concept for describing how systemic psychotherapists generate, or bring forth psychotherapy process. I would suggest that the concept of "principles of change" should be utilized to describe the categorizations of therapists' idiographic explanations of psychotherapeutic reality. This implies that the description of what psychotherapy process means for psychotherapists is inherently irreducible to universally viable principles of change.

I would suggest that this implies that psychotherapy research can be directed towards describing divergent constructions of psychotherapy. This is an intriguing idea because it seems contrary to our desire for science to explain and simplify. The implications of this suggestion are manifold, but I think the essential implication is that we need to embrace methods for describing the complexity of diverse psychotherapeutic processes.

7: I would suggest that one implication of the finding that therapists inhabit mulitverses is that clients also inhabit multiverses. In other words, it is

inevitable that therapists' constructions of therapeutic processes will diverge from clients' constructions. If this implication is accepted, then it is clear that as therapists we can describe how we imagine that we are helping clients to change, and yet at the same time we can know that we have no direct access to objective truth about how clients change. This means that the statement that therapists change others is no more correct than the statement that therapists do not change others. My suggestion is that because we can not be objectively explicit about how clients change, we should consider ourselves as participants in change processes. We do not have sufficient knowledge of how we influence people to say that we are agents or instruments of change. I would suggest that this view at once admits the limitations of our knowledge of our influence, and at the same time is an encouragement to be creative in the methods that we use.

The results of this investigation indicate that therapists believe that they do have influence on the their clients' lives; and there are indications that there was some convergence among observers about the kinds of interactions which indicated that the clients were benefiting from the interactions. The therapists in this investigation described patterns of regularity in the ways that both the clients and therapists constructed their worlds, and they observed their own constructions of their interactions with clients. These patterns are very useful information. This information can be used in conjunction with the knowledge that when two unities recurrently interact, they begin to shift concurrently. They inevitably adapt to each other, and drift together in the medium of their experience. Maturana's descriptions of structural coupling, and ontogenetic co-drift show promise of being useful concepts in observer-referenced descriptions of psychotherapy.

8: Knowledge always exists relative to an observer. The assessment of psychotherapy is relative to an observer's methods for constructing psychotherapeutic process. The products of knowledge are the stabilized recursive operations of distinction through which the knowledge was generated by the observer, e.g., when the observer speaks, the observer reveals himself. The specific implications of these statements which relate to this research have to do with the reader's decisions about the parameters of reference of this observer. The results of this investigation imply that the

implications of this investigation will be generated by the reader; and the implications which the reader creates will reveal the patterns of construction which characterize the reader.

9: Neither therapist nor client will be distinguished in the same language by independent observers. Person A will never describe himself in the same language that others describe him. Two therapy sessions will not be described in the same way by one observer. Two observers will not describe a therapy session in the same way. Observers may drift together in their descriptions through prolonged recurrent interactions - provided there is sufficient basic cohesion between them.

10: Possible applications of a variety of technical and theoretical concepts have been demonstrated. These concepts are connoted by words such as: referential systems, threshold, scale, eigen values, distinction, contradistinction, semantic and political levels, choreography, style, structure determinism, structural and organizational change, orthogonal change, structural coupling, collocational sets, coherence-consensuality-agreement, behavioural-explanatory-conceptual levels of description, and recursion. these are some of the major terms that have been described and exemplified. There are many others. At the explanatory level, the implications of these words or concepts is simply that they have now acquired more history of use, which those who follow may want to consider. This usage may or may not be beneficial to subsequent work conducted readers of this investigation.

11: The concepts of structural and organizational change, which are derived from autopoiesis, may be a useful parallel conceptualization of the distinction between first and second order change.

Implications for practice

12: In training counsellors and psychotherapists, supervisors need to account for stylistic divergences in themselves and their students. One way to do this is by recalling that language is interpreted individually. Similarly, it is good to recall that psychotherapy is interpreted individually. Supervisors are politically powerful, and therefore students are likely to drift towards adopting

their language and style, and this is good, so long as supervisors do not assume that they know objectively what is good or bad therapy.

13: I would suggest that this investigation implies that it is useful for observers of psychotherapists, whether they be researchers, members of therapy teams, or supervisors of therapists, to describe their own metaphoric conceptions of the choreographic styles of the therapists they are observing. This suggestion entails the personal responsibility of the describer for the description, and the self-referentiality of the description to the describer.

14: The results of this investigation imply that in a systemic therapy session, client change is indicated when a majority of observer-therapists' descriptions of therapy converge, or are similar. Typically, the similarities of observer-therapists' descriptions occur at the conceptual and behavioural levels of descriptions.

15: A practical implication of this investigation is that psychotherapy sessions in which a consensus of observers report that there has been a significant shift for the client(s), are typically those sessions which are described with the highest incidence of metaphoric language. Similarly, in those sessions in which a consensus of observers report that there has been a significant shift for the client(s), the therapist who is conducting the session also uses a higher frequency of metaphors than in sessions which a consensus of observers do not report that there has been a significant shift for the client(s).

16: The results of this investigation suggest that counselling sessions in which a consensus of observers indicate that clients have made a significant shift are those sessions in which therapists use a variety of idiosyncratic words, or words which are particularly unique to the particular session being described. Observers of these sessions also describe the sessions with a similar variety of words uniquely germane to the particular sessions. This interpretation might imply that good therapy sessions are those in which the therapist focuses on a unique event. This might also imply that good counselling sessions are indicated when a consensus of observers refers repeatedly to a specific unique event within the therapy session

17: The contents and organization of observers' descriptions of therapy sessions tended to mirror the contents and organization of the therapy sessions which they were observing. The isormorphisms were most apparent when the therapists were describing sessions in which a consensus of observers indicated that the client had made a significant shift; and the isomorphisms were least apparent when little change was described.

18: My descriptions of these systemic therapists' observations illustrated convergences of descriptions of the particular behavioural events which indicated that clients had made significant shifts. These convergences of descriptions of behaviours which indicated change, suggest that even though these therapists might explain or conceptualize these behaviours differently, they share similar means for experiencing and assessing those behaviours which indicate that clients have changed.

19: As Maturana has said, "The claim of knowledge through objectivity is a demand for obedience" (1986). From my experience in this investigation I found that it was difficult to construct a method for describing how therapists constructed their worlds, and it has been difficult to be explicit about the methods that I constructed. Despite, or perhaps because of these difficulties, the process has been inherently valuable for me. The implication here is not that the system which I have described is inherently useful for others, but that the effort to generate such a system has been valuable in itself, regardless of its utility to others. Values such as freedom, choice, curiousity, honesty, and being creatively productive, were the values that were reaffirmed for me in this process.

I would suggest that it is not necessary to use criteria of objective validity to defend this presentation. I would encourage other investigators of psychotherapy to follow a similar approach simply because this experience has been a personal reaffirmation. This reaffirmation is substantial in itself, and it does not depend on whether others believe in the style or results of the investigation. If the reader chooses to agree or disagree with what has been presented, I can only refer to my own construction. This implies that the reader will have a different view that is equally correct.

20: In retrospect, one of the major implications of this research for me is that I have found that psychotherapy is an individual activity. On those occasions in normal practice, when one observes that psychotherapists appear to converge in their opinions about psychotherapy, I would suggest that one is noticing an essentially political process. I would suggest that when therapists elaborate on the semantic levels of their descriptions of therapy, their descriptions tend to be unique, and divergent from each other.

The description of divergent descriptions of psychotherapy is an intriguing and complex process. One of the perplexing aspects of describing divergent individual constructions of psychotherapy is that the researcher inherently reveals him or herself in these descriptions; while at the same time these descriptions also seem to describe the essence of the personal characteristics of the therapist or session being described. In other words, idiographically referenced descriptions of psychotherapy are personal and revealing from many perspectives. I would suggest that this point of personal reference is the point at which useful descriptions of psychotherapy begin.

E Suggestions for future study

1: Any of the central concepts which were described in the summary could be a foundational concept for further study. Essentially, this study has been a stage in the creation of an explanatory language. Therefore, the language will develop as it is used. I cannot determine which of these concepts may appear useful or interesting to future investigators.

2: I would be very interested in exploring the notion of the co-drift in language that seems to occur when people engage in recurrent interactions. The method of lexical analysis would be suitable for this, although more efficient computerized analysis would be advised. There are many arenas of recurrent interactions in the domain of psychotherapy which could be investigated this way; e.g., supervisor-supervisee, team members, therapist-client, observer-therapist - observer-therapist.

3: Someone might be interested in more statistical comparisons of the common lexical features of language users from diverse fields of psychotherapy. This would provide some very useful information about some aspects of language use between groups. Some of these differences might

seem obvious, but I suspect there will be divergences which we have been blind to.

4: Although the analysis of lexical contents of observer-therapists' descriptions of psychotherapy has been useful for generating some descriptions and explanations of the patterns of words that they use, I would suggest that analyses of semantic and syntactic patterns might provide an opportunity to describe and explain integral structural and contextual properties of observer-therapists' language.

5: It would be very interesting to repeat this study with the same psychotherapists after they have read the results of this investigation. I would suggest that they would alter both their patterns of languaging in their descriptions of therapy, and their patterns of languaging and behaviour while doing therapy.

6: A study which might provide interesting results would involve developing a method for investigating the patterns of unique words which therapists use during therapy and in their descriptions of therapy. The word 'unique' in this instance is being used to refer to those words which are distinguished by infrequent use in normal conversation. Examples of this type of words have been illustrated in the lexical analyses of composite session descriptions and in the lexical analyses of composite observer descriptions.

7: A study which might lead to interesting insights about psychotherapeutic change processes would involve analyzing, describing, and explaining, the patterns of use of metaphors by psychotherapists, and by observers of psychotherapy. This study has generated the implication that those psychotherapy sessions in which there is a convergence of observers' descriptions indicating that significant shifts have occurred for the clients, are also those sessions in which the working therapist, and the observers describing the therapy use metaphors more frequently than in sessions in which significant change is not described.

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Work Experience

Family Therapist Trainer (team supervisor): Family Services Bureau, Red Deer, 1986.

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Psychologist (private practice): Personal Development Center, Edmonton, 1985 to 1987.

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Publications

Leading By Following. (1985). with D.D. Sawatzky & W. Hague A counsellor training manual used in Master's level counsellor training, U. of A.

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Research

PhD. Dissertation (Counselling Psychology): Second Order Cybernetics and the Psychotherapy Process. (subsequent research in progress)

Strategic Therapy for University Students with Study Skills Problems. (1984). unpublished manuscript.

A Study Skills Course Evaluation. Master's thesis, Counselling Psychology, University of Alberta, 1982.

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